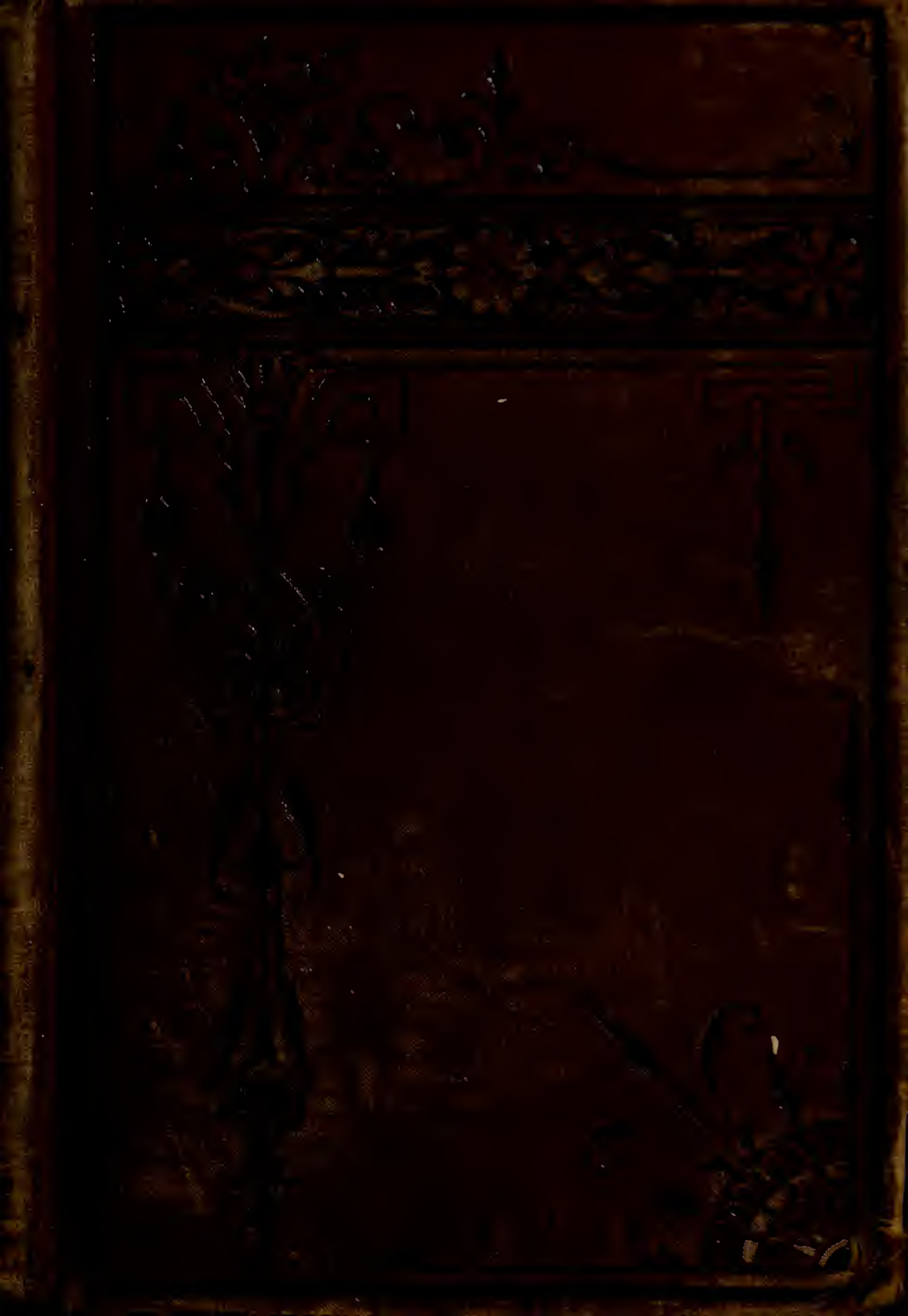
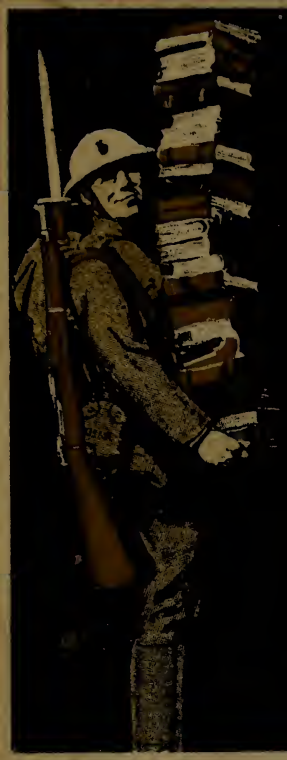




WAR SERVICE LIBRARY

THIS·BOOK·IS PROVIDED·BY THE·PEOPLE OF·THE UNITED·STATES THROUGH·THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE·USE·OF THE·SOLDIERS AND·SAILORS

THE UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS
LIBRARY

813
Ar7tr

BOOKSTACKS

LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

A HOME SCENE.

TRUE RICHES

And Other Tales.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

PHILADELPHIA:
JOHN E. POTTER AND COMPANY.
617 Sansom Street.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year, 1859, by

DUANE RULISON,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

PHILADELPHIA.
STEREOTYPED BY S. A. GEORGE
607 SANSOM STREET

813
Ar7tr
23Mr37Sesly

INTRODUCTION.

The original title chosen for this book was "Riches without Wings;" but the author becoming aware, before giving it a permanent form, that a volume bearing a similar title had appeared some years ago, of which a new edition was about to be issued, thought it best to substitute therefor, "True Riches; or, Wealth without Wings," which, in fact, expresses more accurately the character and scope of his story.

The lessons herein taught are such as cannot be learned too early, nor dwelt on too long or too often, by those who are engaged in the active and all-absorbing duties of life. In the struggle for natural riches—the wealth that meets the eye and charms the imagination—how many forget that *true* riches can *only* be laid in the heart; and that, without these true riches, which have no wings, gold, the god of this world, cannot bestow a single blessing! To give this truth a varied charm for young and old, the author has made of it a

937412

new presentation, and, in so doing, sought to invest it with all the winning attractions in his power to bestow.

To parents who regard the best interests of their children, and to young men and women just stepping upon the world's broad stage of action, we offer our book, in the confident belief that it contains vital principles, which, if laid up in the mind, will, like good seed in good ground, produce an after-harvest, in the garnering of which there will be great joy.

TRUE RICHES

CHAPTER I.

"A FAIR day's business. A *very* fair day's business," said Leonard Jasper, as he closed a small account-book, over which he had been poring, pencil in hand, for some ten minutes. The tone in which he spoke expressed more than ordinary gratification.

"To what do the sales amount?" asked a young man, clerk to the dealer, approaching his principal as he spoke.

"To just two hundred dollars, Edward. It's the best day we've had for a month."

"The best, in more than one sense," remarked the young man, with a meaning expression.

"You're right there, too," said Jasper, with animation, rubbing his hands together as he spoke, in the manner of one who is particularly well pleased with himself. "I made two or three trades that told largely on the sunny side of profit and loss account."

"True enough. Though I've been afraid, ever since you sold that piece of velvet to Harland's wife, that you cut rather deeper than was prudent."

"Not a bit of it—not a bit of it! Had I asked her three dollars a yard, she would have wanted it for two. So I said six, to begin with, expecting to fall extensively; and, to put a good face on the matter, told her that it cost within a fraction of what I asked to make the importation—remarking, at the same time, that the goods were too rich in quality to bear a profit, and were only kept as a matter of accommodation to certain customers."

"And she bought at five?"

"Yes; thinking she had obtained the velvet at seventy-five cents a yard less than its cost. Generous customer, truly!"

"While you, in reality, made two dollars and a half on every yard she bought."

"Precisely that sum."

"She had six yards."

"Yes; out of which we made a clear profit of fifteen dollars. That will do, I'm thinking. Operations like this count up fast."

"Very fast. But, Mr. Jasper"——

"But what, Edward?"

"Is it altogether prudent to multiply operations of this character? Won't it make for you a bad reputation, and thus diminish, instead of increasing, your custom?"

"I fear nothing of the kind. One-half the people are not satisfied unless you cheat them. I've handled the yardstick, off and on, for the last fifteen or twenty years, and I think my observation during that time is worth something. It tells me this—that a bold face, a smooth tongue, and an easy conscience are worth more in our business than

any other qualities. With these you may do as you list. They tell far better than all the 'one-price' and fair-dealing professions, in which people have little faith. In fact, the mass will overreach if they can, and therefore regard these 'honest' assumptions with suspicion."

The young man, Edward Claire, did not make a reply for nearly a minute. Something in the words of Mr. Jasper had fixed his thought, and left him, for a brief space of time, absorbed in his own reflections.

Lifting, at length, his eyes, which had been resting on the floor, he said—

"Our profit on to-day's sales must reach very nearly fifty dollars."

"Just that sum, if I have made a right estimate," replied Jasper; "and that is what I call a fair day's business."

While he was yet speaking, a lad entered the store, and laid upon the counter a small sealed package, bearing the superscription, "Leonard Jasper, Esq." The merchant cut the red tape with which it was tied, broke the seal, and opening the package, took therefrom several papers, over which he ran his eyes hurriedly; his clerk, as he did so, turning away.

"What's this?" muttered Jasper to himself, not at first clearly comprehending the nature of the business to which the communication related. "Executor! To what? Oh! ah! Estate of Ruben Elder. Humph! What possessed him to trouble me with this business? I've no time to play executer to an estate, the whole proceeds of which would

hardly fill my trousers' pocket. He was a thriftless fellow at best, and never could more than keep his head out of water. His debts will swallow up every thing, of course, saving my commissions, which I would gladly throw in to be rid of this business."

With this, Jasper tossed the papers into his desk, and, taking up his hat, said to his clerk—

"You may shut the store, Edward. Before you leave, see that every thing is made safe."

The merchant than retired, and wended his way homeward.

Edward Claire seemed in no hurry to follow this example. His first act was to close the window-shutters and door—turning the key in the latter, and remaining inside.

Entirely alone, and hidden from observation, the young man seated himself, and let his thoughts, which seemed to be active on some subject, take their own way. He was soon entirely absorbed. Whatever were his thoughts, one thing would have been apparent to an observer—they did not run in a quiet stream. Something disturbed their current, for his brow was knit, his compressed lips had a disturbed motion, and his hands moved about at times uneasily. At length he arose, not hurriedly, but with a deliberate motion, threw his arms behind him, and, bending forward, with his eyes cast down, paced the length of the store two or three times, backward and forward, slowly.

"Fifty dollars profit in one day," he at length said, half audibly. "That will do, certainly. I'd be contented with a tenth part of the sum. He's

bound to get rich; that's plain. Fifty dollars in a single day! Leonard Jasper, you're a shrewd one. I shall have to lay aside some of my old-fashioned squeamishness, and take a few lessons from so accomplished a teacher. But, he's a downright cheat!"

Some better thought had swept suddenly, in a gleam of light, across the young man's mind, showing him the true nature of the principles from which the merchant acted, and, for the moment, causing his whole nature to revolt against them. But the light faded slowly; a state of darkness and confusion followed, and then the old current of thought moved on as before.

Slowly, and now with an attitude of deeper abstraction, moved the young man backward and forward the entire length of the room, of which he was the sole occupant. He *felt* that he was alone, that no human eye could note a single movement Of the all-seeing Eye he thought not—his spirit's evil counsellors, drawn intimately nigh to him through inclinations to evil, kept that consciousness from his mind.

At length Claire turned to the desk upon which were the account-books that had been used during the day, and commenced turning the leaves of one of them in a way that showed only a half-formed purpose. There was an impulse to something in his mind; an impulse not yet expressed in any form of thought, though in the progress toward something definite.

"Fifty dollars a day!" he murmurs. Ah, that shows the direction of his mind. He is still strug-

gling in temptation, and with all his inherited cupidities bearing him downward.

Suddenly he starts, turns his head, and listens eagerly, and with a strange agitation. Some one had tried the door. For a few moments he stood in an attitude of the most profound attention. But the trial was not repeated. How audibly, to his own ears, throbbed his heart! How oppressed was his bosom! How, in a current of fire, rushed the blood to his over-excited brain!

The hand upon the door was but an ordinary occurrence. It might now be only a customer, who, seeing a light within, hoped to supply some neglected want, or a friend passing by, who wished for a few words of pleasant gossip. At any other time Claire would have stepped quickly and with undisturbed expectation to receive the applicant for admission. But guilty thoughts awakened their nervous attendants, suspicion and fear, and these had sounded an instant alarm.

Still, very still, sat Edward Claire, even to the occasional suppression of his breathing, which, to him, seemed strangely loud.

Several minutes elapsed, and then the young man commenced silently to remove the various account-books to their nightly safe deposite in the fire-proof. The cash-box, over the contents of which he lingered, counting note by note and coin by coin, several times repeated, next took its place with the books The heavy iron door swung to, the key traversed noiselessly the delicate and complicated wards, was removed and deposited in a place of safety; and, yet unrecovered from his mood of abstraction, the clerk

left the store, and took his way homeward From that hour Edward Claire was to be the subject of a fierce temptation. He had admitted an evil suggestion, and had warmed it in the earth of his mind, even to germination. Already a delicate root had penetrated the soil, and was extracting food therefrom. Oh! why did he not instantly pluck it out, when the hand of an infant would have sufficed in strength for the task? Why did he let it remain, shielding it from the cold winds of rational truth and the hot sun of good affections, until it could live, sustained by its own organs of appropriation and nutrition? Why did he let it remain until its lusty growth gave sad promise of an evil tree, in which birds of night find shelter and build nests for their young?

Let us introduce another scene and another personage, who will claim, to some extent, the reader's attention.

There were two small but neatly, though plainly, furnished rooms, in the second story of a house located in a retired street. In one of these rooms tea was prepared, and near the tea-table sat a young woman, with a sleeping babe nestled to her bosom. She was fair-faced and sunny-haired; and in her blue eyes lay, in calm beauty, sweet tokens of a pure and loving heart. How tenderly she looked down, now and then, upon the slumbering cherub whose winning ways and murmurs of affection had blessed her through the day! Happy young wife! these are thy halcyon days. Care has not thrown upon thee a single shadow from his gloomy wing,

and hope pictures the smiling future with a sky of sunny brightness.

"How long he stays away!" had just passed her lips, when the sound of well-known footsteps was heard in the passage below. A brief time, and then the room-door opened, and Edward Claire came in. What a depth of tenderness was in his voice as he bent his lips to those of his young wife, murmuring—

"My Edith!" and then touching, with a gentler pressure, the white forehead of his sleeping babe.

"You were late this evening, dear," said Edith, looking into the face of her husband, whose eyes drooped under her earnest gaze.

"Yes," he replied, with a slight evasion in his tone and manner; "we have been busier than usual to-day."

As he spoke the young wife arose, and taking her slumbering child into the adjoining chamber, laid it gently in its crib. Then returning, she made the tea—the kettle stood boiling by the grate—and in a little while they sat down to their evening meal.

Edith soon observed that her husband was more thoughtful and less talkative than usual. She asked, however, no direct question touching this change; but regarded what he did say with closer attention, hoping to draw a correct inference, without seeming to notice his altered mood.

"Mr. Jasper's business is increasing?" she said, somewhat interrogatively, while they still sat at the table, an expression of her husband's leading to this remark.

"Yes, increasing very rapidly," replied Claire, with animation. "The fact is, he is going to get rich. Do you know that his profit on to-day s sales amounted to fifty dollars?"

"So much?" said Edith, yet in a tone that showed no surprise or particular interest in the matter.

"Fifty dollars a day," resumed Claire, "counting three hundred week-days in the year, gives the handsome sum of fifteen thousand dollars in the year. I'd be satisfied with as much in five years."

There was more feeling in the tone of his voice than he had meant to betray. His young wife lifted her eyes to his face, and looked at him with a wonder she could not conceal.

"Contentment, dear," said she, in a gentle, subdued, yet tender voice, "is great gain. We have enough, and more than enough, to make us happy. Natural riches have no power to fill the heart's most yearning affections; and how often do they take to themselves wings and fly away."

"Enough, dear!" replied Edward Claire, smiling. "O no, not enough, by any means. Five hundred dollars a year is but a meagre sum. What does it procure for us? Only these two rooms and the commonest necessaries of life. We cannot even afford the constant service of a domestic."

"Why, Edward! what has come over you? Have I complained?"

"No, dear, no. But think you I have no ambition to see my wife take a higher place than this?"

"Ambition! Do not again use that word," said Edith, very earnestly. "What has love to do with ambition? What have we to do with the world and

its higher places? Will a more elegant home secure for us a purer joy than we have known and still know in this our Eden? Oh, my husband! do not let such thoughts come into your mind. Let us be content with what God in his wisdom provides, assured that it is best for us. In envying the good of another, we destroy our own good. There is a higher wealth than gold, Edward; and it supplies higher wants. There are riches without wings; they lie scattered about our feet; we may fill our coffers, if we will. Treasures of good affections and true thoughts are worth more than all earthly riches, and will bear us far more safely and happily through the world; such treasures are given to all who will receive them, and given in lavish abundance. Let us secure of this wealth, Edward, a liberal share."

"Mere treasures of the mind, Edith, do not sustain natural life, do not supply natural demands. They build no houses; they provide not for increasing wants. We cannot always remain in the ideal world; the sober realities of life will drag us down."

The simple-hearted, true-minded young wife was not understood by her husband. She felt this, and felt it oppressively.

"Have we not enough, Edward, to meet every real want?" she urged. "Do we desire better food or better clothing? Would our bodies be more comfortable because our carpets were of richer material, and our rooms filled with costlier furniture? O no! If not contented with such things as Providence gives us to day, we shall not find content-

ment in what he gives us to-morrow; for the same dissatisfied heart will beat in our bosoms. Let Mr. Jasper get rich, if he can; we will not envy his possessions."

"I do not envy him, Edith," replied Claire "But I cannot feel satisfied with the small salary he pays me. My services are, I know, of greater value than he estimates them, and I feel that I am dealt by unjustly."

Edith made no answer. The subject was repugnant to her feelings, and she did not wish to prolong it. Claire already regretted its introduction. So there was silence for nearly a minute.

When the conversation flowed on again, it embraced a different theme, but had in it no warmth of feeling. Not since they had joined hands at the altar, nearly two years before, had they passed so embarrassed and really unhappy an evening as this. A tempting spirit had found its way into their Paradise, burning with a fierce desire to mar its beauty

CHAPTER II.

"Oh, what a dream I have had!" exclaimed Mrs Claire, starting suddenly from sleep, just as the light began to come in dimly through the windows on the next morning; and, as she spoke, she caught hold of her husband, and clung to him. frightened and trembling.

"Oh, such a dream!" she added, as her mind grew clearer, and she felt better assured of the reality that existed. "I thought, love, that we were sitting in our room, as we sit every evening—baby asleep, I sewing, and you, as usual, reading aloud. How happy we were! happier, it seemed, than we had ever been before. A sudden loud knock startled us both. Then two men entered, one of whom drew a paper from his pocket, declaring, as he did so, that you were arrested at the instance of Mr. Jasper, who accused you with having robbed him of a large amount of money."

"Why, Edith!" ejaculated Edward Claire, in a voice of painful surprise. He, too, had been dreaming, and in his dream he had done what his heart prompted him to do on the previous evening—to act unfaithfully toward his employer.

"Oh, it was dreadful! dreadful!" continued Edith. "Rudely they seized and bore you away. Then came the trial. Oh, I see it all as plainly as if it had been real. You, my good, true, noble-hearted husband, who had never wronged another, even in thought—you were accused of robbery in the presence of hundreds, and positive witnesses were brought forward to prove the terrible charge. All they alleged was believed by those who heard. The judges pronounced you guilty, and then sentenced you to a gloomy prison. They were bearing you off, when, in my agony, I awoke. It was terrible, terrible! yet, thank God! only a dream, a fearful dream!"

Claire drew his arms around his young wife, and clasped her with a straining embrace to his bosom.

He made no answer for some time. The relation of a dream so singular, under the circumstances, had startled him, and he almost feared to trust his voice in response. At length, with a deeply-drawn, sighing breath, nature's spontaneous struggle for relief, he said—

"Yes, dear, that was a fearful dream. The thought of it makes me shudder. But, after all, it was only a dream; the whispering of a malignant spirit in your ear. Happily, his power to harm extends no further. The fancy may be possessed in sleep, but the reason lies inactive, and the hands remain idle. No guilt can stain the spirit. The night passes, and we go abroad in the morning as pure as when we laid our heads wearily to rest."

"And more," added Edith, her mind fast recovering itself; "with a clearer perception of what is true and good. The soul's disturbed balance finds its equilibrium. It is not the body alone that is refreshed and strengthened. The spirit, plied with temptation after temptation through the day, and almost ready to yield when the night cometh, finds rest also, and time to recover its strength. In the morning it goes forth again, stronger for its season of repose. How often, as the day dawned, have I lifted my heart and thanked God for sleep!"

Thus prompted, an emotion of thankfulness arose in the breast of Claire, but the utterance was kept back from the lips. He had a secret, a painful and revolting secret, in his heart, and he feared lest something should betray its existence to his wife. What would he not have given at the moment to

have blotted out for ever the memory of thoughts too earnestly cherished on the evening before, when he was alone with the tempter?

There was a shadow on the heart of Edith Claire. The unusual mood of her husband on the previous evening, and the dream which had haunted her through the night, left impressions that could not be shaken off. She had an instinct of danger—danger lurking in the path of one in whom her very life was bound up.

When Edward was about leaving her to go forth for the day, she lingered by his side and clung to him, as if she could not let him pass from the safe shelter of home.

"Ah! if I could always be with you!" said Edith —"if we could ever move on, hand in hand and side by side, how full to running over would be my cup of happiness!"

"Are we not ever side by side, dear?" replied Claire, tenderly. "You are present to my thought all the day."

"And you to mine. O yes! yes! We *are* moving side by side; our mutual thought gives presence. Yet it was the bodily presence I desired. But that cannot be."

"Good-bye, love! Good-bye, sweet one!" said Claire, kissing his wife, and gently pressing his lips upon those of the babe she held in her arms. He then passed forth, and took his way to the store of Leonard Jasper, in whose service he had been for two years, or since the date of his marriage.

A scene transpired a few days previous to this, which we will briefly describe. Three persons were

alone in a chamber, the furniture of which, though neither elegant nor costly, evinced taste and refinement. Lying upon a bed was a man, evidently near the time of his departure from earth. By his side, and bending over him, was a woman almost as pale as himself. A little girl, not above five years of age, sat on the foot of the bed, with her eyes fixed on the countenance of her father, for such was the relation borne to her by the sick man. A lovely creature she was—beautiful even beyond the common beauty of childhood. For a time a solemn stillness reigned through the chamber. A few low-spoken words had passed between the parents of the child, and then, for a brief period, all was deep, oppressive silence. This was interrupted, at length, by the mother's unrestrained sobs, as she laid her face upon the bosom of her husband, so soon to be taken from her, and wept aloud.

No word of remonstrance or comfort came from the sick man's lips. He only drew his arm about the weeper's neck, and held her closer to his heart.

The troubled waters soon ran clear: there was calmness in their depths.

"It is but for a little while, Fanny," said he, in a feeble yet steady voice; "only for a little while."

"I know; I feel that here," was replied, as a thin, white hand was laid against the speaker's bosom. "And I could patiently await my time, but"——

Her eyes glanced yearningly toward the child, who sat gazing upon her parents, with an instinct of approaching evil at her heart.

Too well did the dying man comprehend the meaning of this glance.

"God will take care of her. He will raise her up friends," said he quickly; yet, even as he spoke, his heart failed him.

"All that is left to us is our trust in Him," murmured the wife and mother. Her voice, though so low as to be almost a whisper, was firm. She realized, as she spoke, how much of bitterness was in the parting hours of the dying one, and she felt that duty required her to sustain him, so far as she had the strength to do so. And so she nerved her woman's heart, almost breaking as it was, to bear and hide her own sorrows, while she strove to comfort and strengthen the failing spirit of her husband.

"God is good," said she, after a brief silence, during which she was striving for the mastery over her weakness. As she spoke, she leaned over the sick man, and looked at him lovingly, and with the smile of an angel on her counteance.

"Yes, God is good, Fanny. Have we not proved this, again and again?" was returned, a feeble light coming into the speaker's pale face.

"A thousand times, dear! a thousand times!" said the wife, earnestly. "He is infinite in his goodness, and we are his children."

"Yes, his children," was the whispered response. And over and over again he repeated the words, "His children;" his voice falling lower and lower each time, until at length his eyes closed, and his in-going thought found no longer an utterance.

Twilight had come. The deepening shadows were

fast obscuring all objects in the sick-chamber, where silence reigned, profound almost as death.

"He sleeps," whispered the wife, as she softly raised herself from her reclining position on the bed. "And dear Fanny sleeps also," was added, as her eyes rested upon the unconscious form of her child.

Two hours later, and the last record was made in Ruben Elder's Book of Life.

For half an hour before the closing scene, his mind was clear, and he then spoke calmly of what he had done for those who were to remain behind.

"To Leonard Jasper, my old friend," said he to his wife, "I have left the management of my affairs. He will see that every thing is done for the best. There is not much property, yet enough to insure a small income; and, when you follow me to the better land, sufficient for the support and education of our child."

Peacefully, after this, he sank away, and, like a weary child falling into slumber, slept that sleep from which the awakening is in another world.

How Leonard Jasper received the announcement of his executorship has been seen. The dying man had referred to him as an old friend; but, as the reader has already concluded, there was little room in his sordid heart for so pure a sentiment as that of friendship. He, however, lost no time in ascertaining the amount of property left by Elder, which consisted of two small houses in the city, and a barren tract of about sixty acres of land, somewhere in Pennsylvania, which had been taken for a debt of five hundred dollars. In view of his death, Elder

had wound up his business some months before, paid off what he owed, and collected in nearly all outstanding accounts; so that little work remained for his executor, except to dispose of the unprofitable tract of land and invest the proceeds.

On the day following the opening of our story, Jasper, who still felt annoyed at the prospect of more trouble than profit in the matter of his executorship, made a formal call upon the widow of his old friend.

The servant, to whom he gave his name, stated that Mrs. Elder was so ill as not to be able to leave her room.

"I will call again, then, in a few days," said he. "Be sure you give her my name correctly. Mr. Jasper—Leonard Jasper."

The face of the servant wore a troubled aspect.

"She is very sick, sir," said she, in a worried, hesitating manner. "Won't you take a seat, for a moment, until I go up and tell her that you are here? Maybe she would like to see you. I think I heard her mention your name a little while ago."

Jasper sat down, and the domestic left the room. She was gone but a short time, when she returned and said that Mrs. Elder wished to see him. Jasper arose and followed her up-stairs. There were some strange misgivings in his heart—some vague, troubled anticipations, that oppressed his feelings. But he had little time for thought ere he was ushered into the chamber of his friend's widow.

A single glance sufficed to tell him the whole sad truth of the case. There was no room for mistake. The bright, glazed eyes, the rigid, colourless lips,

the ashen countenance, all testified that the hour of her departure drew nigh. How strong, we had almost said, how beautiful, was the contrasted form and features of her lovely child, whose face, so full of life and rosy health, pressed the same pillow that supported her weary head.

Feebly the dying woman extended her hand, as Mr. Jasper came in, saying, as she did so—

"I am glad you have come; I was about sending for you."

A slight tremor of the lips accompanied her words, and it was plain that the presence of Jasper, whose relation to her and her child she understood caused a wave of emotion to sweep over her heart.

"I am sorry, Mrs. Elder, to find you so very ill," said Jasper, with as much of sympathy in his voice as he could command. "Has your physician been here to-day?"

"It is past that, sir—past that," was replied. "There is no further any hope for me in the physician's art."

A sob choked all further utterance.

How oppressed was the cold-hearted, selfish man of the world! His thoughts were all clouded, and his lips for a time sealed. As the dying woman said, so he felt that it was. The time of her departure had come. An instinct of self-protection—protection for his feelings—caused him, after a few moments, to say, and he turned partly from the bed as he spoke—

"Some of your friends should be with you, ma'am, at this time. Let me go for them. Have you a sister or near relative in the city?"

The words and movement of Mr. Jasper restored at once the conscious self-possession of the dying mother, and she raised herself partly up with a quick motion, and a gleam of light in her countenance.

"Oh, sir," she said eagerly, "do not go yet. I have no sister, no near relative; none but you to whom I can speak my last words and give my last injunction. You were my husband's friend while he lived, and to you has he committed the care of his widow and orphan. I am called, alas, too soon! to follow him; and now, in the sight of God, and in the presence of his spirit—for I feel that he is near us now—I commit to you the care of this dear child. Oh, sir! be to her as a father. Love her tenderly, and care for her as if she were your own. Her heart is rich with affection, and upon you will its treasures be poured out. Take her! take her as your own! Here I give to you, in this the solemn hour of my departure, that which to me is above all price."

And as she said this, with a suddenly renewed strength, she lifted the child, and, ere Jasper could check the movement, placed her in his arms. Then, with one long, eager, clinging kiss pressed upon the lips of that child, she sank backward on the bed; and life, which had flashed up brightly for a moment, went out in this world for ever

CHAPTER III.

Leonard Jasper would have been less than human had he borne such an assault upon his feelings without emotion; less than human had his heart instantly and spontaneously rejected the dying mother's wildly eloquent appeal. He was bewildered, startled, even deeply moved.

The moment he could, with propriety and a decent regard for appearances, get away from the house where he had witnessed so painful a scene, he returned to his place of business in a sobered, thoughtful state of mind. He had not anticipated so direct a guardianship of Ruben Elder's child as it was evident would now devolve upon him, in consequence of the mother's death. Here was to be trouble for him—this was his feeling so soon as there was a little time for reaction—and trouble without profit. He would have to take upon himself the direct charge of the little girl, and duly provide for her maintenance and education.

"If there is property enough for this, well and good," he muttered to himself; he had not yet become acquainted with the real state of affairs. "If not," he added; firmly, "the loss will be hers; that is all. I shall have sufficient trouble and annoyance, without being put to expense."

For some time after his return to his store, Jasper refrained from entering upon any business. During

at least fifteen or twenty minutes, he sat at his desk, completely absorbed in thought. At length he called to Edward Claire, his principal clerk, and said that he wished to speak a few words with him. The young man came back from the counter to where he was sitting, wondering what had produced the very apparent change in his employer's state of mind.

"Edward," said Mr. Jasper, in a low, serious voice, "there is a little matter that I must get you to attend to for me. It is not very pleasant, it is true; though nothing more than people are required to do every day. You remember Mr. Elder, Ruben Elder, who formerly kept store in Second street?"

"Very well."

"He died last week."

"I noticed his death in the papers."

"He has appointed me his executor."

"Ah?"

"Yes; and I wish to my heart he had appointed somebody else. I've too much business of my own to attend to."

"Of course," said Claire, "you will receive your regular commissions for attending to the settlement of his estate."

"Poor picking there," replied Jasper, shrugging his shoulders. "I'd very cheerfully give up the profit to be rid of the trouble. But that doesn't signify now. Elder has left his affairs in my hands, and I must give them at least some attention. I'm not coming to the point, however. A little while ago I witnessed the most painful scene that ever fell under my eyes."

"Ah!"

"Yes, truly. Ugh! It makes the chills creep over me as I think of it. Last evening I received regular notification of my appointment as executor to Elder's estate, and to-day thought it only right to call upon the widow, and see if any present service were needed by the family. Such a scene as I encountered! Mrs. Elder was just at the point of death, and expired a few moments after my entrance. Besides a single domestic and a child, I was the only witness of her last extremity."

"Shocking!"

"You may well say shocking, Edward, unprepared as I was for such an occurrence. My nerves are quivering yet."

"Then the widow is dead also?"

"Yes; both have gone to their long home."

"How many childen are left?"

"Only one—a little girl, not, I should think, above four years of age."

"Some near relative will, I presume, take charge of her."

"In dying, the mother declared that she had no friend to whom she could leave the child. On me, therefore, devolves the care of seeing to its maintenance."

"No friend. Poor child! and of so tender an age!"

"She is young, certainly, to be left alone in the world."

Jasper uttered these words, but felt nothing of the sad meaning they involved.

"What disposition will you make of her?" asked Claire.

"I've had no time to think of that yet. Other matters are first to be regarded. So let me come to the point. Mrs. Elder is dead; and, as far as I could see, there is no living soul, beyond a frightened servant, to do any thing. Whether she will have the presence of mind to call in the neighbours, is more than I can say. I left in the bewilderment of the moment; and now remember me that something is to be done for the dead. Will you go to the house, and see what is needed? In the next block is an undertaker; you had better call, on your way, and ask him to go with you. All arrangements necessary for the funeral can be left in his hands. Just take this whole matter off of me, Edward, and I will be greatly obliged to you. I have a good many things on my mind, that must receive close attention."

The young man offered no objection, although the service was far from being agreeable. On his return, after the absence of an hour, Jasper had, of course, many inquiries to make. Claire appeared serious. The fact was, he had seen enough to touch his feelings deeply. The grief of the orphaned child, as he was a witness thereto, had brought tears upon his cheeks, in spite of every manly effort to restrain them. Her extreme beauty struck him at the first glance, even obscured as it was under a vail of sorrow and weeping.

"There were several persons in, you say?" remarked Jasper, after Claire had related a number of particulars.

"Yes, three or four."

"Ladies, of course?"

"Yes."

"Did any of them propose to take the child home with them?"

"Not directly. One woman asked me a number of questions about the little girl."

"Of what nature?"

"As to whether there were any relatives or particular friends who would take charge of her?"

"And you told her there were none?"

"Yes; none of whom I had any knowledge."

"Well? What had she to say to that?"

"She wanted to know if there would be any thing for the child's support. I said that there would, in all probability."

"Well?"

"Then she gave me to understand, that if no one took the child, she might be induced to board her for a while, until other arrangements were made."

"Did you give her to understand that this was practicable?"

"No, sir."

"Why not? She will have to be boarded, you know."

"I neither liked the woman's face, manner, nor appearance."

"Why not?"

"Oh, she was a vulgar, coarse, hard-looking creature to my eyes."

"Kind hearts often lie concealed under unpromising externals."

"True; but they lie not concealed under that exterior, be well assured, Mr. Jasper. No, no. The child who has met with so sad a loss as that of a

mother, needs the tenderest guardianship. At best, the case is hard enough."

Jasper did not respond to this humane sentiment, for there was no pity in him. The waves of feeling, stirred so suddenly a few hours before, had all subsided, and the surface of his heart bore no ripple of emotion. He thought not of the child as an object claiming his regard, but as a trouble and a hinderance thrown in his way, to be disposed of as summarily as possible.

"I'm obliged to you, Edward, for the trouble you have taken in my stead," he remarked, after a slight pause. "To-morrow, I may wish you to call there again. Of course, the neighbours will give needful attention until the funeral takes place. By that time, perhaps, the child will have made a friend of some one of them, and secure, through this means, a home for the present. It is, for us, a troublesome business at best, though it will soon be over."

A person coming in at the moment, Claire left his employer to attend at the counter. The new customer, it was quickly perceived by the clerk, was one who might readily be deceived into buying the articles for which she inquired, at a rate far in advance of their real value; and he felt instantly tempted to ask her a very high price. Readily, for it was but acting from habit, did he yield to this temptation. His success was equal to his wishes. The woman, altogether unsuspicious of the cheat practised upon her, paid for her purchases the sum of ten dollars above their true value. She lingered a short time after settling her bill, and made some observation upon a current topic of the day. One

or two casually-uttered sentiments did not fall like refreshing dew upon the feelings of Claire, but rather stung him like words of sharp rebuke, and made him half regret the wrong he had done to her. He felt relieved when she retired.

It so happened that, while this customer was in, Jasper left the store. Soon after, a clerk went to dinner. Only a lad remained with Claire, and he was sent up-stairs to arrange some goods.

The hour of temptation had again come, and the young man's mind was overshadowed by the powers of darkness.

"Ten dollars clear gain on that transaction," said he to himself, as he drew open the money-drawer in which he had deposited the cash paid to him by his late customer.

For some time his thoughts were busy, while his fingers toyed with the gold and bills in the drawer. Two five-dollar pieces were included in the payment just received.

"Jasper, surely, ought to be satisfied with one of these." Thus he began to argue with himself. "I drove the bargain; am I not entitled to a fair proportion of the profit? It strikes me so. What wrong will it be to him? Wrong? Humph! Wrong? The wrong has been done already; but it falls not on his head.

"If I am to do this kind of work for him,"—the feelings of Claire now commenced running in a more disturbed channel; there were deep contractions on his forehead, and his lips were shut firmly,—"this kind of work, I must have a share of the benefit.

If I am to sell my soul, Leonard Jasper shall not have the whole price."

Deliberately, as he spoke this within himself, did Claire take from the drawer a five-dollar gold piece, and thrust it into his pocket.

"Mine, not his," were the words with which he approved the act. At the same instant Jasper entered. The young man's heart gave a sudden bound, and there was guilt in his face, but Jasper did not read its true expression.

"Well, Edward," said he, cheerfully, "what luck did you have with the old lady? Did she make a pretty fair bill?"

"So-so," returned Claire, with affected indifference; "about thirty dollars."

"Ah! so much?"

"Yes; and, what is better, I made her pay pretty strong. She was from the country."

"That'll do." And Jasper rubbed his hands together energetically. "How much over and above a fair percentage did you get?"

"About five dollars."

"Good, again! You're a trump, Edward."

If Edward Claire was relieved to find that no suspicion had been awakened in the thoughts of Jasper, he did not feel very strongly flattered by his approving words. The truth was, at the very moment he was relating what he had done, there came into his mind, with a most startling distinctness, the dream of his wife, and the painful feelings it had occasioned.

"What folly! What madness! Whither am I going?"

These were his thoughts now, born of a quick revulsion of feeling.

"It is your dinner-time, Edward. Get back as soon as possible. I want to be home a little earlier than usual to-day."

Thus spoke Mr. Jasper; and the young man, taking up his hat, left the store. He had never felt so strangely in his life. The first step in crime had been taken; he had fairly entered the downward road to ruin. Where was it all to end? Placing his fingers, almost without thought, in his pocket, they came in contact with the gold-piece obtained by a double crime—the robbery both of a customer and his employer. Quickly, as if he had touched a living coal, was the hand of Claire withdrawn, while a low chill crept along his nerves. It required some resolution for the young man to meet his pure-hearted, clear-minded wife, whose quick intuitions of good or evil in others he had over and over again been led to remark. Once, as he moved along, he thrust his hand into his pocket, with the suddenly-formed purpose of casting the piece of money from him, and thus cancelling his guilt. But, ere the act was accomplished, he remembered that in this there would be no restoration, and so refrained.

Edward Claire felt, while in the presence of his young wife, that she often looked into his face with more than usual earnestness. This not only embarrassed but slightly fretted him, and led him to speak once in a way that brought tears to her eyes.

Not a minute longer than necessary did Claire remain at home. The fact that his employer had desired him to return to the store as quickly as pos-

sible, was an all-sufficient reason for his unusual hurry to get away.

The moment the door closed upon him, his wife burst into tears. On her bosom lay a most oppressive weight, and in her mind was a vague, troubled sense of approaching evil. She felt that there was danger in the path of her husband; but of its nature she could divine little or nothing. All day her dream had haunted her; and now it reproduced itself in her imagination with painful distinctness. Vainly she strove to drive it from her thoughts; it ould not be gone. Slowly the hours wore on for her, until the deepening twilight brought the period when her husband was to return again. To this return her mind looked forward with an anxiety that could not be repressed.

The dreaded meeting with his wife over, Claire thought with less repugnance of what he had done, and was rather inclined to justify than condemn himself.

"It's the way of the world," so he argued; "and unless I do as the world does, I must remain where I am—at the bottom of the ladder. But why should I stay below, while all around me are struggling upward? As for what preachers and moralists call strictly fair dealing, it may be all well enough in theory, pleasant to talk about, and all that; but it won't do in practice, as the world now is. Where each is grasping all that he can lay his hands on, fair or foul, one must scramble with the rest, or get nothing. That is so plain that none can deny the proposition. So, Edward Claire, if you wish to rise above your present poor condition, if you wish to

get rich, like your enterprising neighbours, you must do as they do. If I go in for a lamb, I might as well take a sheep: the morality of the thing is the same. If I take a large slice off of a customer, why shall not a portion of that slice be mine; ay, the whole of it, if I choose to make the appropriation? All Jasper can fairly ask, is a reasonable profit: if I, by my address, get more than this, surely I may keep a part thereof. Who shall say nay?"

Justifying himself by these and similar false reasonings, the young man thrust aside the better suggestions, from which he was at first inclined to retrace the false step he had taken; and wilfully shutting his eyes, resolved to go forward in his evil and dangerous course.

During the afternoon of that day a larger number of customers than usual were in, and Claire was very busily occupied. He made three or four large sales, and was successful in getting several dollars in excess of fair profit from one not very well skilled in prices. In making an entry of this particular transaction in the memorandum sales-book, the figures recorded were three dollars less than the actual amount received. So, on this, the first day of the young man's lapse from honesty, he had appropriated the sum of eight dollars—nearly equal to his entire week's salary! For such a recent traveller in this downward road, how rapid had already become his steps!

Evening found him again alone, musing and debating with himself, ere locking up the store and returning home. The excitement of business being

over, his thoughts flowed in a calmer current; and the stillness of the deserted room gave to his feelings a hue of sobriety. He was not altogether satisfied with himself. How could he be? No man ever was satisfied with himself, when seclusion and silence found him after his first departure from the right way. Ah, how little is there in worldly possessions, be it large or small, to compensate for a troubled, self-accusing spirit! how little to throw in the balance against the heavy weight of conscious villany!

How tenderly, how truly, how devotedly had Edward Claire loved the young wife of his bosom, since the hour the pulses of their spirits first beat in joyful unity! How eager had he ever been to turn his face homeward when the shadows of evening began to fall! But now he lingered—lingered, though all the business of the day was over. The thought of his wife created no quick impulse to be away. He felt more like shunning her presence. He even for a time indulged a motion of anger toward her for what he mentally termed her morbid sensitiveness in regard to others' right—her dreamy ideal of human perfection.

"We are in the world, and we must do as it does. We must take it as it is, not as it should be."

So he mused with himself, in a self-approving argument. Yet he could not banish the accusing spirit; he could not silence the inward voice of warning.

Once there came a strong revulsion. Good impulses seemed about to gain the mastery. In this state of mind, he took from his pocket his ill-gotten

gains, and threw them into the money-box, which had already been placed in the fire-closet.

"What good will that do?" said he to himself, as the wave of better feelings began to subside. "All the sales-entries have been made, and the cash balanced; Jasper made the balance himself. So the cash will only show an excess to be accounted for; and from this may come suspicion. It is always more hazardous to go backward than forward—(false reasoner!)—to retrace our steps than to press boldly onward. No, no. This will not mend the matter."

And Claire replaced the money in his pocket. In a little while afterward, he left the store, and took his way homeward.

CHAPTER IV.

As on the previous evening, Mrs. Claire was alone for some time later than usual, but now with an anxious, almost fearful looking for her husband's return. Suddenly she had taken the alarm. A deep, brooding shadow was on her heart, though she could not see the bird of night from whose wings it had fallen. Frequently, during the afternoon, tears had wet her cheek; and when an old friend of her mother's, who lived in the country, and who had come to the city in order to make a few purchases, called to see her, it was with diffi-

culty she could hide her disturbed feelings from observation.

The absent one came in at last, and with so much of the old, frank, loving spirit in his voice and manner, that the troubled heart of Mrs. Claire beat with freer pulsations. And yet something about her husband appeared strange. There was a marked difference between his state of mind now, and on the evening before. Even at dinner-time he was silent and abstracted.

In fact, Edward Claire was, for the first time, acting a part toward his wife; and, as in all such cases, there was sufficient over-action to betray the artifice, or, at least, to awaken a doubt. Still, Edith was greatly relieved by the change, and she chided herself for having permitted doubt and vague questionings to find a harbour in her thoughts.

During tea-time, Claire chatted freely, as was his custom; but he grew serious as they sat together, after the table was cleared away, and Edith had taken her sewing. Then, for the first time, he thought out of himself sufficiently to remember his visit to the house of death in the morning, and he said—

"I witnessed something this morning, dear, that has made me feel sad ever since."

"What was that, Edward?" inquired the wife, looking instantly into his face, with a strongly manifested interest.

"I don't think you knew Mr. Elder or his family —Ruben Elder?"

"I have heard the name, nothing more."

"Mr. Elder died last week."

"Ah! What family did he leave?"

"A wife and one child."

Mrs. Claire sighed.

"Did he leave them comfortably off in the world?" she asked, after a brief silence.

"I don't know; but I'm afraid he's not left much, if any thing. Mr. Jasper has been appointed the executor."

"Mr. Jasper!"

"Yes. This morning he called to see Mrs. Elder, and found her in a very low state. In fact, she died while he was there."

"Edward! Died?"

"Yes, died; and her only child, a sweet little girl, not five years old, is now a friendless orphan."

"How very sad!"

"Sad enough, Edith, sad enough. Mr. Jasper, who has no taste for scenes of distress, wished me to look after the funeral arrangements; so I went to the house, and attended to matters as well as I could. Ah me! It has cast a gloom over my feelings that I find it hard to cast off."

"Did you see the child?" inquired Mrs. Claire, the mother's impulse giving direction to her thoughts.

"Yes; and a lovely child it is. Poor thing!"

"There are near relatives, I presume?"

"None; at least, so Jasper says."

"What is to become of the child?"

"Dear above knows! As for her legal guardian, she has nothing to hope from his humanity. She will naturally find a home somewhere—a home procured for money. But her future comfort and well

being will depend more on a series of happy accidents than on the good-will of the hard-hearted man to whose tender mercies the dying parents have committed her."

"Not happy accidents, Edward," said Mrs. Claire, with a tender smile; "say, wise providences. There is no such thing as chance."

"As you will, dear," returned the husband, with a slight change in his tone. "I would not call that providence wise by which Leonard Jasper became the guardian of a friendless child."

"This is because you cannot see the end from the beginning, Edward. The Lord's providence does not regard merely the external comfort and well-being of his creatures; it looks far beyond this, and regards their internal interests. It permits evil and suffering to-day, but only that good, a higher than earthly good, may come on the morrow. It was no blind chance, believe me, my husband, that led to the appointment of Mr. Jasper as the guardian of this poor child. Eternal purposes are involved therein, as surely as God is infinitely wise and good. Good to one, perhaps to many, will grow out of what now seems a deeply to be regretted circumstance."

"You're a happy reasoner, Edith. I wish I could believe in so consoling a philosophy."

"Edward!" There was a change in Mrs. Claire's voice, and a look blending surprise with a gentle rebuke in her countenance. "Edward, how can you speak so? Is not mine the plain Christian doctrine? Is it not to be found everywhere in the Bible?"

"Doubtless, Edith; but I'm not one of the pious kind, you know."

Claire forced a smile to his face, but his wife looked serious, and remarked—

"I don't like to hear you talk so, Edward. There is in it, to me, something profane. Ah, my dear husband, in this simple yet all-embracing doctrine of providence lies the whole secret of human happiness. If our Creator be infinite, wise, and good, he will seek the well-being of his creatures, even though they turn from him to do violence to his laws; and, in his infinite love and wisdom, will so order and arrange events as to make every thing conspire to the end in view. Both bodily and mental suffering are often permitted to take place, as the only agencies by which to counteract hereditary evils that would otherwise destroy the soul."

"Ah, Edie! Edie!" said Claire, interrupting his wife, in a fond, playful tone, "you are a wise preacher, and as good as you are wise. I only wish that I could see and feel as you do; no doubt it would be better for me in the end. But such a wish is vain."

"Oh, say not so, dear husband!" exclaimed Edith, with unexpected earnestness; "say not so! It hurts me almost like words of personal unkindness."

"But how can I be as good as you are? It isn't in me."

"I am not good, Edward. There is none good but God," answered the wife solemnly.

"Oh yes, yes! You are an angel!" returned

Claire, with a sudden emotion that he could not control. "And I—and I"——

He checked himself, turned his face partly away to conceal its expression, sat motionless for a moment, and then burying his face on the bosom of his wife, sobbed for the space of nearly a minute, overcome by a passion that he in vain struggled to master.

Never had Edith seen her husband so moved. No wonder that she was startled, even frightened.

"Oh, Edward, dear Edward! what ails you?" were her eager, agitated words, so soon as she could speak. "What has happened? Oh, tell me, my husband, my dear husband!"

But Claire answered not, though he was gaining some control over his feelings.

"Oh, Edward! won't you speak to me? Won't you tell me all your troubles, all your heart? Am I not your wife, and do I not love you with a love no words can express? Am I not your best and closest friend? Would I not even lay down my life for your good? Dear Edward, what has caused this great emotion?"

Thus urged, thus pleaded the tearful Edith. But there was no reply, though the strong tremor which had thrilled through the frame of Claire had subsided. He was still bowed forward, with his face hid on her bosom, while her arm was drawn lovingly around him. So they remained for a time longer. At length, the young man lifted himself up, and fixed his eyes upon her. His countenance was pale and sad, and bore traces of intense suffering.

"My husband! my dear husband!" murmured Edith.

"My wife! my good angel!" was the low, thrilling response; and Claire pressed his lips almost reverently upon the brow of his wife.

"I have had a fearful dream, Edith!" said he; "a very fearful dream. Thank God, I am awake now."

"A dream, Edward?" returned his wife, not fully comprehending him.

"Yes, love, a dream; yet far too real. Surely, I dreamed, or was under some dire enchantment. But the spell is gone—gone, I trust, for ever."

"What spell, love? Oh, speak to me a plainer language!"

"I think, Edith," said the young man, after remaining thoughtfully silent for some time, "that I will try and get another place. I don't believe it is good for me to live with Leonard Jasper. Gold is the god he worships; and I find myself daily tempted to bend my knee in the same idolatry."

"Edward!" A shadow had fallen on the face of Edith.

"You look troubled at my words, Edith," resumed the young man; "yet what I say is true, too true. I wish it were not so. Ah! this passage through the world, hard and toilsome as it is, has many, many dangers."

"If we put our trust in God, we need have no fear," said Edith, in a gentle yet earnest and penetrating voice, laying her hand lovingly on the hot forehead of her husband, and gazing into his eyes.

"Nothing without can harm us. Our worst enemies are within."

"Within?"

"Yes, love; within our bosoms. Into our distrusts and unsatisfied desires they enter, and tempt us to evil."

"True, true," said Claire, in an abstracted manner, and as if speaking to himself.

"What more do we want to make us happy?" asked Edith, comprehending still more clearly her husband's state of mind.

Claire sighed deeply, but made no answer.

"More money could not do it," she added.

"Money would procure us many comforts that we do not now possess," said the young man.

"I doubt this, Edward. It might give more of the elegancies of life; but, as I have often said, these do not always produce corresponding pleasure. If they come, without too ardent seeking, in the good pleasure of Providence, as the reward of useful and honest labour, then they may increase the delights of life; but never otherwise. If the heart is set on them, their acquirement will surely end in disappointment. Possession will create satiety; and the mind too quickly turns from the good it has toiled for in hope so long, to fret itself because there is an imagined higher good beyond. Believe me, Edward, if we are not satisfied with what God gives us as the reward of useful toil to-day, we will not be satisfied with what he gives to-morrow."

"Perhaps you are right, Edith; I believe you are. My mind has a glimpse of the truth, but to fully real-

ize it is hard. Ah, I wish that I possessed more of your trusting spirit!"

"We are both cared for, Edward, by the same infinite love—cared for, whether we doubt and fear, or trust confidingly."

"It must be so. I see it now, I feel it now—see it and feel it in the light of your clearer intuitions. Ah, how different from this pure faith is the faith of the world! Men worship gold as their god; they trust only in riches."

"And their god is ever mocking them. To-day he smiles upon his votary, and to-morrow hides his face in darkness. To-day he gives full coffers, that are empty to-morrow. But the true riches offered so freely to all by the living God are blessed both in the getting and in the keeping. These never produce satiety, never take to themselves wings. Good affections and true thoughts continually nourish and re-create the mind. They are the soul's wealth, the perennial fountains of all true enjoyment. With these, and sufficient for the body's health and comfort, all may be happy: without them, the riches of the world have no power to satisfy."

A pause ensued, during which the minds of both wandered back a little.

"If you feel," said Edith, recalling the words of her husband, "that there is danger in remaining where you are"——

"That was hastily spoken," Edward Claire interrupted his wife, "and in a moment of weakness. I must resist the evil that assaults me. I must strive with and overcome the tempter. I must think less

of this world and its riches; and in my thought place a higher value upon the riches without wings of which you have spoken to me so often."

"Can you remain where you are, and be out of danger?" asked Edith.

"There is danger everywhere."

"Ay; but in some positions more imminent danger. Is it well to court temptation?"

"Perhaps not. But I cannot afford to give up my place with Jasper."

"Yet, while remaining, you will be strongly tempted."

"Jasper is dishonest at heart. He is ever trying to overreach in dealing, and expects every one in his employment to be as keen as himself."

"Oh, Edward, do not remain with him a day longer! There is death to the spirit in the very atmosphere around such a man. You cannot serve such a master, and be true to yourself and to God. It is impossible."

"I believe you are right in that, Edith; I know you are right," said the young man, with a strong emphasis on the last sentence. "But what am I to do? Five hundred dollars a year is little enough for our wants; I have, as you know, been dissatisfied with that. I can hardly get as much in another situation. I know of but one opening, and that is with Melleville."

"Go back to him, Edward," said his wife.

"And get but four hundred a year? It is all he can pay."

"If but three hundred, it were a situation far to be preferred to the one you now hold."

"A hundred dollars a year, Edith, taken from our present income, would deprive us of many comforts."

"Think of how much we would gain in true inward enjoyment, Edward, by such a change. Have you grown happier since you entered the store of Mr. Jasper?"

The young man shook his head sadly, and murmured, "Alas! no."

"Can any thing compensate for the anguish of mind we have both suffered in the last few hours, Edward?"

There was a quick flushing of the face, as Edith said this.

"Both suffered!" exclaimed Edward, with a look of surprise.

"Ay, both, love. Can the heart of my husband feel a jar of discord, and mine not thrill painfully? Can he be in temptation, without an overshadowing of my spirit? Can he be in darkness, and I at the same time in light? No, no; that were impossible. You have been in great peril; I knew that some evil threatened you, even before you confessed it with your lips. Oh, Edward, we have both tasted, in the last few hours, a bitterer cup than has yet been placed to our lips. May we not be called upon to drink it to the very dregs!"

"Amen!" fell solemnly from the lips of Edward Claire, as a cold shudder crept along his nerves. If there had been any wavering in his mind before, there was none now. He resolved to make restitution in the morning, and, as soon as opportunity offered, to leave a place where he was so strongly tempted to step aside from the path of integrity. The virtue of his wife had saved him.

CHAPTER V.

"EDWARD," said Mr. Jasper, on the next morning, soon after he came to the store, "Was any time fixed for the funeral yesterday?"

"I believe not."

"That was an oversight. It might as well take place to-day as to-morrow, or a week hence, if there are no intimate friends or relatives to be thought of or consulted. I wish you would take the forenoon to see about this troublesome matter. The undertaker will, of course, do every thing according to your directions. Let there be as little expense as possible."

While they were yet speaking, the undertaker came in to make inquiry as to the funeral arrangements to be observed.

"Is the coffin ready?" asked Jasper, in a cold, business manner.

"It is," was the reply.

"What of the ground? Did you see to her husband's funeral?"

"Yes. I have attended to all these matters. Nothing remains but to fix the time, and notify the clergyman."

"Were you at the house this morning?" asked Jasper.

"I was."

"Who did you find there?"

"One or two of the neighbours were in."

"No near relatives of the deceased?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Was any thing said about the time for burying Mrs. Elder?"

"No. That matter, I suppose, will rest with you."

"In that case, I see no reason for delay," said Jasper. "What end is served?"

"The sooner it is over the better."

"So I think. Suppose we say this afternoon?"

"Very well. The time might be fixed at five. The graveyard is not very distant. How many carriages shall I order?"

"Not many. Two, I should think, would be enough," replied Jasper. "There will not be much left, I presume; therefore, the lighter the funeral expenses the better. By the way, did you see the child, when you were there this morning?"

"No, sir."

"Some neighbour has, in all probability, taken it."

"Very likely. It is a beautiful child."

"Yes—rather pretty," was Jasper's cold response.

"So young to be left alone in the world. Ah, me! But these things will happen. So, you decide to have the funeral at five this afternoon?"

"Yes; unless something that we do not now know of, interferes to prevent. The quicker a matter like this is over the better."

"True. Very well."

"You will see to every thing?"

"Certainly; that is my business. Will you be at the house this afternoon?"

"At the time of the funeral?"

"Yes."

"I think not. I can't do any good."

"No,—only for the looks of the thing."

The undertaker was already beginning to feel the heartless indifference of Jasper, and his last remark was half in irony, half in smothered contempt.

"Looks! Oh! I never do any thing for looks. If I can be of any service, I will be there—but, if not, not. I'm a right up-and-down, straight-forward man of the world, you see."

The undertaker bowed, saying that all should be as he wished.

"You can step around there, after a while, Edward," said Jasper, as soon as the undertaker had retired. "When you go, I wish you would ascertain, particularly, what has been done with the child. If a neighbour has taken her home, make inquiry as to whether she will be retained in the family; or, better still, adopted. You can hint, in a casual way, you know, that her parents have left property, which may, some time or other, be valuable. This may be a temptation, and turn the scale in favour of adoption; which may save me a world of trouble and responsibility."

"There is some property left?" remarked Claire.

"A small house or two, and a bit of worthless land in the mountains. All, no doubt, mortgaged within a trifle of their value. Still, it's property you know; and the word 'property' has a very attractive sound in some people's ears."

A strong feeling of disgust toward Jasper swelled in the young man's heart, but he guarded against its expression in look or words.

A customer entering at the moment, Claire left his principal and moved down behind the counter. He was not very agreeably affected, as the lady approached him, to see in her the person from whom he had taken ten dollars on the previous day, in excess of a reasonable profit. Her serious face warned him that she had discovered the cheat.

"Are you the owner of this store?" she asked, as she leaned upon the counter, and fixed her mild, yet steady eyes, upon the young man's face.

"I am not, ma'am," replied Claire, forcing a smile as he spoke. "Didn't I sell you a lot of goods yesterday?"

"You did, sir."

"I thought I recognised you. Well, ma'am, there was an error in your bill—an overcharge."

"So I should think."

"An overcharge of five dollars."

Claire, while he affected an indifferent manner, leaned over toward the woman and spoke in a low tone of voice. Inwardly, he was trembling lest Jasper should became cognizant of what was passing.

"Will you take goods for what is due you; or shall I hand you back the money?" said he.

"As I have a few more purchases to make, I may as well take goods," was replied, greatly to the young man's relief.

"What shall I show you, ma'am?" he asked, in a voice that now reached the attentive ears of Jasper, who had been wondering to himself as to what was passing between the clerk and customer.

A few articles were mentioned, and, in a little while, another bill of seven dollars was made.

"I am to pay you two dollars, I believe?" said the lady, after Claire had told her how much the articles came to. As she said this, Jasper was close by and heard the remark.

"Right, ma'am," answered the clerk.

The customer laid a ten-dollar bill on the counter. Claire saw that the eyes of Jasper were on him. He took it up, placed it in the money-drawer, and stood some time fingering over the change and small bills. Then, with his back turned toward Jasper, he slipped a five dollar goldpiece from his pocket. This, with a three dollar bill from the drawer, he gave to the lady, who received her change and departed.

Other customers coming in at the moment, both Jasper and his clerk were kept busy for the next hour. When they were alone again, the former said—

"How large a bill did you sell the old lady from the country, who was in this morning?"

"The amount was seven dollars, I believe."

"I thought she said two dollars?"

"She gave me a ten-dollar bill, and I only took three from the drawer," said the young man.

"I thought you gave her a piece of gold?"

"There was no gold in the drawer," was replied, evasively.

Much to the relief of Claire, another customer entered, thus putting an end to the conference between him and Jasper.

The mind of the latter, ever suspicious, was not altogether satisfied. He was almost sure that two dollars was the price named for the goods, and that he had seen a gold coin offered in change. And he

took occasion to refer to it at the next opportunity, when his clerk's positive manner, backed by the entry of seven dollars on the sales' book, silenced him.

As for Claire, this act of restitution, so far as it was in his power to make it, took from his mind a heavy burden. He had, still, three dollars in his possession that were not rightfully his own. It was by no means probable that a similar opportunity to the one just embraced would occur. What then was it best for him to do? This question was soon after decided, by his throwing the money into the cash-drawer of Jasper.

On his way home to dinner that day, Claire called into the store of a Mr. Melleville, referred to in the conversation with his wife on the previous evening. This gentleman, who was somewhat advanced in years, was in the same business with Jasper. He was known as a strictly upright dealer—"Too honest to get along in this world," as some said. "Old Stick-in-the-mud," others called him. "A man behind the times," as the new-comers in the trade were pleased to say. Claire had lived with him for some years, and left him on the offer of Jasper to give him a hundred dollars more per annum than he was getting.

"Ah, Edward! How do you do to-day?" said Mr. Melleville, kindly, as the young man came in.

"Very well in body, but not so well in mind," was the frank reply, as he took the proffered hand of his old employer.

"Not well in mind, ah! That's about the worst kind of sickness I know of, Edward. What's the matter?"

"As I have dropped in to talk with you a little about my own affairs, I will come at once to the point."

"That is right. Speak out plainly, Edward, and you will find in me, at least, a sincere friend, and an honest adviser. What is the matter now?"

"I don't like my present situation, Mr. Melleville!"

"Ah! Well? What's the trouble? Have you and Jasper had a misunderstanding?"

"Oh no! Nothing of that. We get on well enough together. But I don't think its a good place for a young man to be in, sir!"

"Why not?"

"I can be plain with you. In a word, Mr. Jasper is not an honest dealer; and he expects his clerks to do pretty much as he does."

Mr. Melleville shook his head and looked grave.

"To tell the truth," continued Edward, "I have suffered myself to fall, almost insensibly, into his way of doing business, until I have become an absolute cheat—taking, sometimes, double and treble profit from a customer who happened to be ignorant about prices."

"Edward!" exclaimed the old man, an expression of painful surprise settling on his countenance.

"It is all too true, Mr. Melleville—all too true. And I don't think it good for me to remain with Mr. Jasper."

"What does he give you now?"

"The same as at first. Five hundred dollars."

The old man bent his head and thought for a few moments.

"His system of unfair dealing toward his customers is your principal objection to Mr. Jasper?"

"That is one objection, and a very serious one, too: particularly as I am required to be as unjust to customers as himself. But there is still another reason why I wish to get away from this situation. Mr. Jasper seems to think and care for nothing but money-getting. In his mind, gold is the highest good. To a far greater extent than I was, until very recently, aware, have I fallen, by slow degrees, into his way of thinking and feeling; until I have grown dissatisfied with my position. Temptation has come, as a natural result; and, before I dreamed that my feet were wandering from the path of safety, I have found myself on the brink of a fearful precipice."

"My dear young friend!" said Mr. Melleville, visibly moved, "this is dreadful!"

"It is dreadful. I can scarcely realize that it is so," replied Claire, also exhibiting emotion.

"You ought not to remain in the employment of Leonard Jasper. That, at least, is plain. Better, far better, to subsist on bread and water, than to live sumptuously on the ill-gotten gold of such a man."

"Yes, yes, Mr. Melleville, I feel all the truth of what you affirm, and am resolved to seek for another place. Did you not say, when we parted two years ago, that if ever I wished to return, you would endeavour to make an opening for me?"

"I did, Edward; and can readily bring you in now, as one of my young men is going to leave me for a higher salary than I can afford to pay. There is one drawback, however."

"What is that, Mr. Melleville?"

"The salary will be only four hundred dollars a year."

"I shall expect no more from you."

"But can you live on that sum now? Remember, that you have been receiving five hundred dollars, and that your wants have been graduated by your rate of income. Let me ask—have you saved any thing since you were married?"

"Nothing."

"So much the worse. You will find it difficult to fall back upon a reduced salary. How far can you rely on your wife's co-operation?"

"To the fullest extent. I have already suggested to her the change, and she desires, above all things, that I make it."

"Does she understand the ground of this proposed change?" asked Mr. Melleville.

"Clearly."

"And is willing to meet privation—to step down into even a humbler sphere, so that her husband be removed from the tempting influence of the god of this world?"

"She is, Mr. Melleville. Ah! I only wish that I could look upon life as she does. That I could see as clearly—that I could gather, as she is gathering them in her daily walk, the riches that have no wings."

"Thank God for such a treasure, Edward! She is worth more than the wealth of the Indies. With such an angel to walk by your side, you need feel no evil."

"You will give me a situation, then, Mr. Melleville?"

"Yes, Edward," replied the old man.

"Then I will notify Mr. Jasper this afternoon, and enter your service on the first of the coming month. My heart is lighter already. Good day."

And Edward hurried off home.

During the afternoon he found no opportunity to speak to Mr. Jasper on the subject first in his thoughts, as that individual wished him to attend Mrs. Elder's funeral, and gather for him all possible information about the child. It was late when he came back from the burial-ground—so late that he concluded not to return, on that evening, to the store. In the carriage in which he rode, was the clergyman who officiated, and the orphan child who, though but half comprehending her loss, was yet overwhelmed with sorrow. On their way back, the clergyman asked to be left at his own dwelling; and this was done. Claire was then alone with the child, who shrank close to him in the carriage. He did not speak to her; nor did she do more than lift, now and then, her large, soft, tear-suffused eyes to his face.

Arrived, at length, at the dwelling from which they had just borne forth the dead, Claire gently lifted out the child, and entered the house with her. Two persons only were within, the domestic and the woman who, on the day previous, had spoken of taking to her own home the little orphaned one. The former had on her shawl and bonnet, and said that she was about going away.

"You will not leave this child here alone," said Edward.

"I will take her for the present," spoke up the

other. "Would you like to go home with me, Fanny?" addressing the child. "Come,"—and she held out her hands.

But the child shrank closer to the side of Edward, and looked up into his face with a silent appeal that his heart could not resist.

"Thank you, ma'am," he returned politely. "But we won't trouble you to do that. I will take her to my own home for the present. Would you like to go with me, dear?"

Fanny answered with a grateful look, as she lifted her beautiful eyes again to his face.

And so, after the woman and the domestic had departed, Edward Claire locked up the house, and taking the willing child by the hand, led her away to his own humble dwelling.

Having turned himself resolutely away from evil, already were the better impulses of his nature quickened into active life. A beautiful humanity was rising up to fill the place so recently about to be consecrated to the worship of a hideous selfishness.

CHAPTER VI.

Edward Claire was in no doubt as to the reception the motherless child would receive from his kind-hearted wife. A word or two of explanation enabled her to comprehend the feeling from which he had acted.

"You were right, Edward," said she in hearty approval. "I am glad you brought her home. Come, dear," speaking to the wondering, partly shrinking orphan, "let me take off your bonnet."

She kissed the child's sweet lips and then gazed for some moments into her face, pleased, yet half surprised, at her remarkable beauty.

Little Fanny felt that she was among friends. The sad expression of her face soon wore off, light came back to her eyes, and her prattling tongue released itself from a long silence. An hour afterward, when she was laid to sleep in a temporary bed, made for her on the floor, her heavy eyelids fell quickly, with their long lashes upon her cheeks, and she was soon in the world of dreams.

Then followed a long and serious conference between Edward and his wife.

"I saw Mr. Melleville to-day," said the former.

"Did you? I am glad of that," was answered.

"He will give me a place."

"Glad again."

"But, Edith, as I supposed, he can only pay me a salary of four hundred dollars."

"No matter," was the prompt reply; "it is better than five hundred where you are."

"Can we live on it, Edith?" Edward spoke in a troubled voice.

"Why not? It is but to use a little more economy in our expenses—to live on two dollars a week less than we now spend; and that will not be very hard to do. Trust it to me, dear. I will bring the account out even. And we will be just as happy. As happy? Oh, a thousand times happier! A hun-

dred dollars! How poorly will that compensate for broken peace and a disquieted conscience. Edward, is it possible for you to remain where you are, and be innocent?"

"I fear not, Edith," was the unhesitating reply. "And yet, dear, I should be man enough, should have integrity enough, to resist the temptations that might come in my way."

"Do not think of remaining where you are," said the young wife earnestly. "If Mr. Mellevilie will pay you four hundred dollars a year, take his offer and leave Mr. Jasper. It will be a gain rather than a loss to us."

"A gain, Edith?"

"Yes, a gain in all that is worth having in life—peace of mind flowing from a consciousness of right action. Will money buy this? No, Edward. Highly as riches are esteemed—the one great good in life as they are regarded—they never have given and never will give this best of all blessings. How little, how very little of the world's happiness, after all, flows from the possession of money. Did you ever think of that, Edward?"

"Perhaps not."

"And yet, is it not worth a passing thought? Mr. and Mrs. Casswell are rich—we are poor. Which do you think the happiest?"

"Oh, we are happiest, a thousand times," said Edward warmly. "I would not exchange places with him, were he worth a million for every thousand."

"Nor I with his wife," returned Edith. "So money, in their case, does not give happiness Now

look at William Everhart and his wife. When we were married they occupied two rooms, at a low rent, as we now do. Their income was just what ours has been. Well, they enjoyed life. We visited them frequently, and they often called to see us. But for a little ambition on the part of both to make some show, they would have possessed a large share of that inestimable blessing, contentment. After a while, William's salary was raised to one thousand dollars. Then they must have a whole house to themselves, as if their two nice rooms were not as large and comfortable, and as well suited to their real wants as before. They must, also, have showy furniture for their friends to look at. Were they any happier for this change?—for this marked improvement in their external condition? We have talked this over before, Edward. No, they were not. In fact, they were not so comfortable. With added means had come a whole train of clamorous wants, that even the doubled salary could not supply."

"Everhart gets fifteen hundred a year, now," remarked Claire.

"That will account, then," said Edith, smiling, "for Emma's unsettled state of mind when I last saw her. New wants have been created; and they have disturbed the former tranquillity."

"All are not so foolish as they have been. I think we might bear an increased income without the drawbacks that have attended theirs."

"If it had been best for us, my husband, God would have provided it. It is in his loving-kindness that he has opened the way so opportunely for you

to leave the path of doubt and danger for one of confidence and safety; and, in doing it, he has really increased your salary."

"Increased it, Edith! Why do you say that?"

"Will we not be happier for the change?" asked Edith, smiling.

"I believe so."

"Then, surely, the salary is increased by so much of heartfelt pleasure. Why do you desire an increase rather than a diminution of income?"

"In order to procure more of the comforts of life," was answered.

"Comfort for the body, and satisfation for the mind?"

"Yes."

"Could our bodies really enjoy more than they now enjoy? They are warmly clothed, fully fed, and are in good health. Is it not so?"

"It is."

"Then, if by taking Mr. Melleville's offer, you lose nothing for the body, and gain largely for the mind, is not your income increased?"

"Ah, Edith!" said Claire, fondly, you are a wonderful reasoner. Who will gainsay such arguments?"

"Do I not argue fairly? Are not my positions sound, and my deductions clearly brought forth."

"If I could always see and feel as I do now," said Claire, in a low, pleased tone of voice, "how smoothly would life glide onward. Money is not every thing. Ah! how fully that is seen. There are possessions not to be bought with gold."

"And they are mental possessions—states of the

mind, Edward," spoke up Edith quickly. "Riches that never fade, nor fail; that take to themselves no wings. Oh, let us gather of these abundantly, as we walk on our way through life."

"Heaven has indeed blessed me." Such was the heartfelt admission of Edward Claire, made in the silence of his own thoughts. "With a different wife—a lover of the world and its poor vanities—how imminent would have been my danger! Alas! scarcely any thing less than a miracle would have saved me. I shudder as I realize the fearful danger through which I have just passed. I thank God for so good a wife."

The first inquiry made by Jasper, when he met Edward on the next morning, was in relation to what he had seen at the funeral, and, particularly, as to the disposition that had been made of the child.

"I took her home with me," was replied, in answer to a direct question.

"You did!" Jasper seemed taken by surprise. "How came that, Edward?"

"When I returned from the cemetery, I found the domestic ready to leave the house. Of course the poor child could not remain there alone; so I took her home with me for the night."

"How did your wife like that?" asked Jasper, with something in his tone that showed a personal interest in the reply.

"Very well. I did just what she would have done under the circumstances."

"You have only one child, I believe?" said Jasper, after a pause of some moments.

"That is all."

"Only three in family?"

"Only three."

"How would you like to increase it? Suppose you keep this child of Elder's, now she is with you. I have been looking a little into the affairs of the estate, and find that there are two houses, unincumbered, that are rented each for two hundred and fifty dollars a year. Of course, you will receive a reasonable sum for taking care of the child. What do you say to it? As executor, I will pay you five dollars a week for boarding and clothing her until she is twelve years of age. After that, a new arrangement can be made."

"I can't give an answer until I consult my wife," said Claire, in reply to so unexpected a proposition.

"Urge her to accept the offer, Edward. Just think what it will add to your income. I'm sure it won't cost you one-half the sum, weekly, that I have specified, to find the child in every thing."

"Perhaps not. But all will depend on my wife. We are living, now, in two rooms, and keep no domestic. An addition of one to our family might so increase her care and labour as to make a servant necessary. Then we should have to have an additional room; the rent of which and the wages and board of the servant would amount to nearly as much as we would receive from you on account of the child."

"Yes, I see that," returned Jasper. And he mused for some moments. He was particularly anxious that Claire should take the orphan, for then

all the trouble of looking after and caring for her would be taken from him, and that would be a good deal gained.

"I'll tell you what, Edward," he added. "If you will take her, I will call the sum six dollars a week —or three hundred a year. That will make the matter perfectly easy. If your wife does not seem at first inclined, talk to her seriously. This addition to your income will be a great help. To show her that I am perfectly in earnest, and that you can depend on receiving the sum specified, I will draw up a little agreement, which, if all parties are satisfied, can be signed at once."

Claire promised to talk the matter over with his wife at dinner-time.

The morning did not pass without varied assaults upon the young man's recent good resolutions. Several times he had customers in from whom it would have been easy to get more than a fair profit, but he steadily adhered to what he believed to be right, notwithstanding Jasper once or twice expressed dissatisfaction at his not having made better sales, and particularly at his failing to sell a piece of cloth, because he would not pledge his word as to its colour and quality—neither of which were good.

The proposition of Jasper for him to make, in his family, a place for the orphan, caused Claire to postpone the announcement of his intention to leave his service, until after he had seen and conferred with his wife.

At the usual dinner-hour, Claire returned home. His mind had become by this time somewhat dis-

turbed. The long-cherished love of money, subdued for a brief season, was becoming active again. Here were six dollars to be added, weekly, to his income, provided his wife approved the arrangement, —and it was to come through Jasper. The more he thought of this increase, the more his natural cupidity was stirred, and the less willing he felt to give up the proposed one hundred dollars in his salary. If he persisted in leaving Jasper, there would, in all probability, be a breach between them, and this would, he felt certain, prevent an arrangement that he liked better and better the more he thought about it. He was in this state of mind when he arrived at home.

On pushing open the door of their sitting-room, the attention of Claire was arrested by the animated expression of his wife's face. She raised her finger to enjoin silence. Tripping lightly to his side, she drew her arm within his, and whispered—

"Come into the chamber, dear—tread softly—there, isn't that sweet?—isn't it lovely?"

The sight was lovely indeed. A pillow had been thrown on the floor, and upon this lay sleeping, arm in arm, the two children. Pressed close together were their rosy cheeks; and the sunny curls of Fanny Elder were mixed, like gleams of sunshine, amid the darker ringlets that covered profusely the head of little Edith.

"Did you ever see any thing so beautiful?" said the delighted mother.

"What a picture it would make!" remarked Edward, who was charmed with the sight.

"Oh, lovely! How I would like just such a picture!"

"She is a beautiful child," said Edward.

"Very," was the hearty response. "Very—and so sweet-tempered and winning in her ways. Do you know, I am already attached to her. And little Edie is so delighted. They have played all the morning like kittens; and a little while ago lay down, just as you see them—tired out, I suppose—and fell off to sleep. It must have been hard for the mother to part with that child—hard, very hard."

And Mrs. Claire sighed.

"You will scarcely be willing to give her up, if she remains here long," said Edward.

"I don't know how I should feel to part from her, even now. Oh, isn't it sad to think that she has no living soul to love or care for her in the world."

"Mr. Jasper is her guardian, you know."

"Yes; and such a guardian!"

"I should not like to have my child dependent on his tender mercies, certainly. But he will have little to do with her beyond paying the bills for her maintenance. He will place her in some family to board; and her present comfort and future well-being will depend very much upon the character of the persons who have charge of her."

Edith sighed.

"I wish," said she, after a pause, "that we were able to take her. But we are not."

And she sighed again.

"Mr. Jasper will pay six dollars a week to any

one who will take the entire care of her until she is twelve years of age."

"Will he?" A sudden light had gleamed over the face of Mrs. Claire.

"Yes; he said so this morning."

"Then, why may not we take her? I am willing," was Edith's quick suggestion.

"It is a great care and responsibility," said Edward.

"I shall not feel it so. When the heart prompts, duty becomes a pleasure. O yes, dear, let us take the child by all means."

"Can we make room for her?"

"Why not? Her little bed, in a corner of our chamber, will in noway incommode us; and through the day she will be a companion for Edie. If you could only have seen how sweetly they played together! Edie has not been half the trouble to-day that she usually is."

"It will rest altogether with you, Edith," said Claire, seriously. "In fact, Mr. Jasper proposed that we should take Fanny. I did not give him much encouragement, however."

"Have you any objection, dear?" asked Edith.

"None. The sum to be paid weekly will more than cover the additional cost of housekeeping. If you are prepared for the extra duties that must come, I have nothing to urge against the arrangement."

"If extra duties are involved, I will perform them as a labour of love. Without the sum to be paid for the child's maintenance, I would have been ready to take her in and let her share our home.

She is now in the special guardianship of the Father of the fatherless, and he will provide for her, no matter who become the almoners of his bounty. This is my faith, Edward, and in this faith I would have freely acted even without the provision that has been made."

"Let it be then, as you wish, Edith."

'How providential this increase of our income, Edward!" said his wife, soon afterward, while the subject of taking Fanny into their little household was yet the burden of their conversation. "We shall gain here all, and more than all that will be lost in giving up your situation with Mr. Jasper. Did I not say to you that good would come of this guardianship; and is there not, even now, a foreshadowing of things to come?"

"Perhaps there is," replied Edward thoughtfully. "But my eye of faith is not so clear as yours."

"Let me see for you then, dear," said Edith, in a tender voice. "I am an earnest confider in the gook purposes of our Heavenly Father. I trust in them, as a ship trusts in its well-grounded anchor. That, in summing up the events of our life, when the time of our departure comes, we shall see clearly that each has been wisely ordered or provided for by One who is infinitely good and wise, I never for an instant doubt. Oh, if you could only see with me, eye to eye, Edward! But you will, love, you will—that my heart assures me. It may be some time yet—but it will come."

"May it come right speedily!" was the fervent response of Edward Claire.

CHAPTER VII.

"Well, Edward, what does your wife say?" Such was the inquiry of Jasper, immediately on the return of his clerk from dinner.

"There will be no difficulty, so far as she is concerned," the young man answered.

"None, did you say, Edward?"

"None. She is willing to take the child, under the arrangement you propose."

"That is, for three hundred dollars a year, to find her in every thing?"

"Yes; until she is twelve years of age."

"So I understand it. After that, as the expense of her clothing and education will increase, we can make a new arrangement. Very well. I'm glad you have decided to take the child. It won't cost you six dollars a week, for the present, I am sure: so the additional income will be quite a help to you."

"I don't know how that will be. At any rate, we are willing to take the child into our family."

"Suppose then, Edward, we mutually sign this little agreement to that effect, which I have drawn up."

And Jasper took a paper from his desk, which he handed to Edward.

"I've no objection," said the latter, after he had read it over. "It binds me to the maintenance of the child until she is twelve years of age, and you

to the payment therefor of three hundred dollars a year, in quarterly payments of seventy-five dollars each."

"Yes, that is the simple statement of the matter. You see, I have prepared duplicates: one for you, and one for myself. I will sign them first."

And Jasper took a pen and placed upon each of the documents his sign-manual.

Claire did the same; and a clerk witnessed the signatures. Each, then, took a copy. Thus, quickly and fully, was the matter arranged.

This fact of giving to the contract a legal form, was, under the circumstances, the very thing Claire most desired. He had already begun to see difficulties ahead, so soon as he announced his intention of leaving Jasper's service; particularly, as no reason that he could give would satisfy the merchant—difficulties growing out of this new relation as the personal guardian of little Fanny Elder. The signing of a regular contract for the payment of a certain sum of money, quarterly, for the child's maintenance, gave him a legal right to collect that sum, should Jasper, from any change of feeling, be disposed at some future time to give him trouble. This was something gained.

It was with exceeding reluctance that Claire forced himself, during the afternoon, to announce his intention to leave Mr. Jasper. Had he not promised Mr. Melleville and his wife to do this, it would certainly have been postponed for the present; perhaps altogether. But his word was passed to both of them, and he felt that to defer the matter would be wrong. So, an opportunity offering, he said—

"I believe, Mr. Jasper, that I shall have to leave you."

"Leave me, Edward!" Mr. Jasper was taken altogether by surprise. "What is the meaning of this? You have expressed no dissatisfaction. What is wrong?"

The position of Edward was a trying one. He could not state the true reasons for wishing to leave his present situation, without giving great offence, and making, perhaps, an enemy. This he wished, if possible, to avoid. A few days before he would not have scrupled at the broadest equivocation, or even at a direct falsehood. But there had been a birth of better principles in his mind, and he was in the desire to let them govern his conduct. As he did not answer promptly the question of Jasper as to his reasons for wishing to leave him, the latter said—

"This seems to be some sudden purpose, Edward. Are you going to receive a higher salary?"

Still Edward did not reply; but looked worried and irresolute. Taking it for granted that no motive but a pecuniary one could have prompted this desire for change, Jasper continued—

"I have been satisfied with you, Edward. You seem to understand me, and to comprehend my mode of doing business. I have found you industrious, prompt, and cheerful in performing your duties. These are qualities not always to be obtained. I do not, therefore, wish to part with you. If a hundred, or even a hundred and fifty dollars a year, will be any consideration, your salary is increased from to-day."

This, to Edward, was unexpected. He felt more bewildered and irresolute than at first. So important an advance in his income, set against a reduction of the present amount, was a strong temptation, and he felt his old desires for money arraying themselves in his mind.

"I will think over your offer," said he. "I did not expect this. In the morning I will be prepared to decide."

"Very well, Edward. If you remain, your salary will be increased to six hundred and fifty dollars."

To Claire had now come another hour of darkness. The little strength, just born of higher principles, was to be sorely tried. Gold was in one scale, and the heavenly riches that are without wings in the other. Which was to overbalance?

The moment Claire entered the presence of his wife, on returning home that evening, she saw that a change had taken place—an unfavourable change; and a shadow fell upon her pure spirit.

"I spoke to Mr. Jasper about leaving him," he remarked, soon after he came in.

"What did he say?" inquired Edith.

"He does not wish me to go."

"I do not wonder at that. But, of course, he is governed merely by a selfish regard to his own interests."

"He offers to increase my salary to six hundred and fifty dollars," said Edward, in a voice that left his wife in no doubt as to the effect which this had produced.

"A thousand dollars a year, Edward," was the serious answer, "would be a poor compensation for

such services as he requires. Loss of self-respect, loss of honour, loss of the immortal soul, are all involved. Think of this, my dear husband! and do not for a moment hesitate."

But Edward did hesitate. This unexpected offer of so important an increase in his salary had excited his love of money, temporarily quiescent. He saw in such an increase a great temporal good; and this obscured his perception of a higher good, which, a little while before, had been so clear.

"I am not so sure, Edith," said he, "that all these sad consequences are necessarily involved. I am under no obligation to deal unfairly with his customers. My duty will be done, when I sell to them all I can at a fair profit. If he choose to take an excess of profit in his own dealing, that is his affair. I need not be partaker in his guilt."

"Edward!" returned his wife, laying her hand upon his arm, and speaking in a low, impressive voice—"Do you really believe that you can give satisfaction to Mr. Jasper in all things, and yet keep your conscience void of offence before God and man? Think of his character and requirements—think of the kind of service you have, in too many instances, rendered him—and then say whether it will be possible to satisfy him without putting in jeopardy all that a man should hold dear—all that is worth living for? Oh, Edward! do not let this offer blind you for a moment to the real truth."

"Then you would have me reject the offer?"

"Without an instant's hesitation, Edward."

"It is a tempting one. And then, look at the

other side, Edith. Only four hundred dollars a year, instead of six hundred and fifty."

"I feel it as no temptation. The latter sum, in the present case, is by far the better salary, for it will give us higher sources of enjoyment. What are millions of dollars, and a disquiet mind, compared to a few hundreds, and sweet peace? If you remain with Jasper, an unhappy spirit will surely steal into our dwelling—if you take, for the present, your old place with Mr. Melleville, how brightly will each morning's sun shine in upon us, and how calmly will the blessed evening draw around her curtains of repose!"

Edith had always possessed great influence over her husband. He loved her very tenderly; and was ever loth to do any thing to which she made opposition. She was no creature of mere impulse—of weak caprices—of captious, yet unbending will. If she opposed her husband in any thing, it was on the ground of its non-agreement with just principles; and she always sustained her positions with the clearest and most direct modes of argumentation. Not with elaborate reasonings, but rather in the declaration of things self-evident—the quick perceptions of a pure, truth-loving mind. How inestimable the blessing of such a wife!

"No doubt you have the better reason on your side, Edith," replied her husband, his manner very much subdued. "But it is difficult for me to unclasp my hand to let fall therefrom the natural good which I can see and estimate, for the seemingly unreal and unsubstantial good that, to your purer vision, looms up so imposingly."

"Unreal—unsubstantial—Edward!" said Edith, in reply to this. "Are states of mind unreal?"

"I have not always found them so," was answered.

"Is happiness, or misery, unreal? Oh, are they not our most palpable realizations? It is not mere wealth that is sought for as an end—that is not the natural good for which the many are striving. It is the mental enjoyment that possession promises—the state of mind that would be gained through gold as a means. Is it not so? Think."

"Yes—that is, undoubtedly, the case."

"But, is it possible for money to give peace and true enjoyment, if, in the spirit, even though not in the letter, violence is done to the laws of both God and man? Can ill-gotten gain produce heavenly beatitudes?—and there are none others. The heart never grows truly warm and joyous except when light from above streams through the darkened vapours with which earth-fires have surrounded it. Oh, my husband! Turn yourself away from this world's false allurements, and seek with me the true riches. Whatever may be your lot in life—I care not how poor and humble—I shall walk erect and cheerful by your side, if you have been able to keep a conscience void of offence; but if this be not so, and you bring to me gold and treasure without stint, my head will lie bowed upon my bosom, and my heart throb in low, grief-burdened pulsations. False lights, believe me, Edward, are hung out by the world, and they lure life's mariner on to dangerous coasts. Let us remain on a smooth and sunny sea, while we can, and not tempt the troubled and uncertain wave, unless duty requires

the venture. Then, with virtue at the helm, and the light of God's love in the sky, we will find a sure haven at last."

"It shall be as you wish, Edith," said Claire, as he gazed with admiring affection into the bright and glowing face of his wife, that was lovely in her beautiful enthusiasm.

"No—no, Edward! Don't say as *I* wish," was her quick reply. "I cannot bear that you should act merely under my influence as an external pressure. If I have seemed to use persuasion, it has not been to force you over to my way of thinking. But, cannot you see that I am right? Does not your reason approve of what I say?"

"It does, Edith. I can see, as well as feel, that you are right. But, the offer of a present good is a strong temptation. I speak freely."

"And I thank you for doing so. Oh! never conceal from me your inmost thoughts. You say that you can see as well as feel that I am right?"

"Yes; I freely acknowledge that."

"Your reason approves what I have said?"

"Fully."

"This tells you that it will be better for you in the end to accept of four hundred dollars from Mr. Melleville, than to remain with Mr. Jasper at six hundred and fifty?"

"It does, Edith."

"Then, my husband, let the reason which God has given to you as a guide, direct you now in the right way. Do not act under influence from me—for then the act will not be freely your own—but, as a truly rational, and, therefore, a wise man, choose

now the way in which an enlightened reason tells you that you ought to walk."

"I have chosen, Edith," was the young man's low, but firm reply.

"How?" The wife spoke with a sudden, trembling eagerness, and held her breath for an answer.

"I will leave my present place, and return to Mr. Melleville."

"God be thanked!" came sobbing from the lips of Edith, as she threw herself in unrestrained joy upon the bosom of her husband.

CHAPTER VIII.

"I DON'T just understand this," said Jasper to himself, after the interview with his clerk described in another chapter. "I thought him perfectly satisfied. He didn't say he was offered a higher salary. Ah! guess I've got it now. It's only a bit of a ruse on his part to get me to increase his wages. I didn't think of this before. Well, it has succeeded; and, in truth, he's worth all I've offered him. Shrewd, quick, and sharp; he's a young man just to my mind. Should he grow restless again, I must tempt him with the idea of a partnership at some future period. If business goes on increasing, I shall want some one with me whom I can trust and depend on more fully than on a clerk."

Thus, in the mind of Jasper, all was settled; and he was fully prepared, on the next morning, when

he met Edward, to hear from him that he would remain in his service. A different decision took him altogether by surprise.

"Where are you going?" he asked. Edward hesitated a moment ere replying.

"Back to Mr. Melleville's."

"To Melleville's! Will he give you more salary than I have agreed to pay?"

"No," was the answer; "but I have reasons for wishing to accept the place he offers me."

"Well, just as you please," said Jasper, coldly. "Every one must suit himself."

And, with the air of a person offended, he turned himself from the young man. Soon after he went out, and did not come back for two or three hours. When he re-entered the store there was an angry flash in his eyes, which rested somewhat sternly upon Claire.

"Let me say a word with you, Edward."

There happened to be no customer in to engage the clerk's attention, and he retired, with his employer, to the back part of the store. Jasper then turned and confronted him with a stern aspect.

"Well, young man!" said he sharply, "it seems that you have been making rather free with my good name, of late; representing me as a cheat and a swindler."

For a few moments the mind of Claire was strongly excited and in a perfect maze of confusion. The blood mounted to his face, and he felt a rising and choking sensation in his throat. Wisely he forbore any answer until he had regained his self-possession. Then, with a coolness that surprised even himself, he said—

"That's a broad accusation, Mr. Jasper. Will you go with me to your authority?"

Jasper was not just prepared for a response like this; and he cooled down, instantly, several degrees.

"My authority is quite satisfactory," he returned, still manifesting angry feeling. "That you have been slandering me is plain; and, also, betraying the confidential transactions of the house. It is full time we parted—full time. I didn't dream that I was warming an adder to sting me?"

"I must insist, Mr. Jasper," said Claire firmly, "that you give me your authority for all this. Let me stand face to face with the man who has so broadly accused me."

"Then you deny it all?"

"I shall neither affirm nor deny any thing. You have angrily accused me of having done you a great wrong. All I ask is your authority, and the right to stand face to face with that authority. This is no light matter, Mr. Jasper."

"Well said, young man. It is no light matter, as you will, perhaps, know to your sorrow in the end. Don't suppose, for a moment, that I shall either forget or forgive this outrage. Leave me because I cheat in my business!" An expression of unmitigated contempt was on his face. "Poh! What hypocrisy! I know you! And let Mr. Melleville beware. He, I more than suspect, is at the bottom of this. But he'll rue the day he crossed my path—he will!"

And Jasper ground his teeth in anger.

By this time, Claire had become entirely self-pos-

sessed. He was both surprised and troubled; yet concealed, as far as possible, the real state of his feelings.

"So far as Mr. Melleville is concerned," said he, "I wish you to understand, that I applied to *him* for the situation."

"Exactly! That is in agreement with what I heard. I was such a rogue that you could not live with me and keep a clear conscience—so you sought for a place with an honest man."

Claire dropped his eyes to the floor, and stood musing for some considerable time. When he raised them, he looked steadily at his employer and said—

"Mr. Jasper, I never made use of the words you have repeated."

"If not the very words, those of a like signification?"

"To whom? There is no need of concealment, Mr. Jasper." Claire was feeling less and less anxious for the result of this conference every moment. "Speak out freely, and you will find me ready to do the same. There had been some underhand work here—or some betrayal of an ill-advised confidence. The former, I am most ready to believe. In a word, sir, and to bring this at once to an issue—your informant in this matter is Henry Parker, who lives with Mr. Melleville."

The change instantly perceptible in the manner of Jasper showed that Edward's suspicion was right. He had, all at once, remembered that, during his conversation with Melleville, this young man was near.

"I see how it is," he continued. "An eavesdrop-

per has reported, with his own comments and exaggerations, a strictly confidential interview. Such being the case, I will state the plain truth of the matter. Are you prepared to hear it?"

"Oh, certainly," replied Jasper, with a covert sneer in his voice. "I'm prepared to hear any thing."

"Very well. What I have to say is now wrung from me. I did not wish to leave you in anger. I did not wish to draw upon me your ill-will. But, what is unavoidable must be borne. It is true, Mr. Jasper, as you have been informed, that I am not satisfied with your way of doing business."

"How long since, pray?" asked Jasper, with ill-disguised contempt.

"I did not like it in the beginning, but gradually suffered myself to think that all was fair in trade, until I found I was no better than a common cheat! Happily, I have been able to make a sudden pause in the way I was going. From this time, I will serve no man who expects me to overreach a customer in dealing. So soon as my mind was fully made up to leave your employment, I called to see my old friend, Mr. Melleville; stated to him, frankly and fully, what I thought and felt; and asked him if he could not make room for me in his store. Parker doubtless overheard a part of what we were saying, and reported it to you. I would, let me say in passing, much rather hold my relation to this unpleasant business than his. Mr. Melleville offered me my old salary—four hundred dollars—and I agreed to enter his service."

"Four hundred dollars!" Jasper said this in unfeigned surprise.

"Yes, sir; that is all he can afford to pay, and of course all I will receive."

"And I offered you six hundred and fifty."

"True."

"Edward, you are the most consummate fool I ever heard of."

"Time will show that," was the undisturbed reply. "I have made my election thoughtfully, and am prepared to meet the result."

"You'll repent of this; mark my word for it."

"I may regret your ill-will, Mr. Jasper; but never repent this step. I'm only thankful that I possessed sufficient resolution to take it."

"When are you going?"

"Not before the end of this month, unless you wish it otherwise. I would like to give you full time to supply my place."

"You can go at once, if it so please you. In fact, after what has just passed, I don't see how you can remain, or I tolerate your presence."

"I am ready for this, Mr. Jasper," coolly replied the young man.

"How much is due you?" was inquired, after a brief silence.

"Twenty-five dollars, I believe," answered Claire.

Jasper threw open a ledger that lay on the desk, and, turning to the young man's account, ran his eyes up the two columns of figures, and then struck a balance.

"Just twenty-seven dollars," said he, after a second examination of the figures. "And here's the money," he added, as he took some bills from the desk and counted out the sum just mentioned. "Now

sign me a receipt in full to date, and that ends the matter."

The receipt was promptly signed.

"And now," sneered Jasper, bowing with mock deference, "I wish you joy of your better place. You will, in all probability, hear from me again. I haven't much faith in your over-righteous people; and will do myself the justice to make some very careful examinations into your doings since you entered my service. If all is right, well; if not, it won't be good for you. I'm not the man to forgive ingratitude, injury, and insult—of all three of which you have been guilty."

"We will not bandy words on that subject, Mr. Jasper," said Claire—"I simply deny that I have been guilty of either of the faults you allege. As for an investigation into my business conduct, that you can do as early and as thoroughly as you please. I shall feel no anxiety for the result."

Jasper did not reply. For a few moments the young man stood as if expecting some remark; none being made, he turned away, gathered together a few articles that were his own private property, tied them into a bundle and marked his name thereon. Then bowing to the merchant, he retired—oppressed from recent painful excitement, yet glad, in his inmost feelings, that a connection so dangerous as that with Jasper had been dissolved—dissolved even at the cost of making an enemy.

CHAPTER IX.

As no event of particularly marked interest occurred with those whose histories we are writing, during the next few years, we will pass over that time without a record. Some changes of more or less importance have taken place, in the natural progress of things; but these will become apparent as we pursue the narrative.

A dull, damp November day was losing itself in the sombre twilight, when Edward Claire left the store of Mr. Melleville, and took his way homeward. An errand for his wife led him past his old place of business. As he moved along the street, opposite, he noticed a new sign over the door, the large gilt letters of which were strongly reflected in the light of a gas-lamp. It bore the words, JASPER & PARKER.

Involuntarily the young man sighed. If he had remained with Jasper, there was little doubt but that his name would have been the one now associated with his in a copartnership. Parker was the young man who had betrayed the conversation between Claire and Mr. Melleville. His end in doing this was to gain the favour of Jasper, and thus secure the place left vacant by the departing clerk. He had succeeded in his purpose. Jasper offered him the situation, and he took it. Five years afterward, in which time Jasper had made money

rapidly, he was elevated to the position of partner, with a fair interest in the business. He had been honest toward his employer, because he saw that through him there was a chance to rise. Honest in heart he was not, for he never scrupled to overreach a customer.

Edward Claire, as we have remarked, sighed involuntarily. His own prospects in life were not what are called flattering. His situation with Mr. Melleville was now worth five hundred dollars a year, but his family had increased, and with the increase had come new wants. The condition of Mr. Melleville's business gave him no encouragement to hope for a larger income while in his service. Several times during the last two years he had made application for vacant places, but without success. Sometimes he felt restless and discouraged, as his vision penetrated the future; but there was ever a cheerful light at home that daily dispelled the coming shadows.

Scarcely had the sigh lost itself on the air, when a hand was laid on his arm, and an old acquaintance said—

"Ah, Edward! How are you?"

Claire seeing the face of his friend, returned the greeting cordially.

"What have you been doing with yourself?" asked the latter. "It is months, I believe, since I had the pleasure of meeting you."

"Busy all day," returned Clare, "and anchored at home in the evening. So the time is passing."

"Pleasantly and profitably, I hope," said the friend.

"Pleasantly enough, I will own," was answered; "as to the profit—if you mean in a money sense—there is not much to boast of."

"You are still with Melleville?"

"Yes."

"At what salary?"

"Five hundred."

"Is that all? How much family have you?"

"Three children; or, I might say four; but the fourth brings us three hundred dollars a year for her maintenance."

"That is something."

"Oh yes. It is quite a help."

"By the way, Edward—the new store we just past reminds me of it—your old friend Jasper has just given one of his clerks, named Parker, an interest in his business."

"So I am aware."

"Jasper is doing first-rate."

"He is making money, I believe."

"Coining it. The fact is, Edward, you never should have left him. Had you kept that situation, you would have been the partner now. And, by the way, there was rather a strange story afloat at the time you took it into your head to leave Jasper."

"Ah! what was it?"

"It is said that you thought him a little too close in his dealings, and left him on that account. I hadn't given you credit for quite so tender a conscience. How was it, Edward?"

"I didn't like his modes of doing business, and, therefore, left him. So far you heard truly."

"But what had you to do with *his* modes of doing business?"

"A great deal. As one of his employées, I was expected to carry out his views."

"And not being willing to do that, you left his service."

"That is the simple story."

"Excuse me, Edward, but I can't help calling you a great fool. Just see how you have stood in your own light. But for this extra bit of virtue, for which no one thinks a whit the better of you, you might this day have been on the road to fortune, instead of Parker."

"I would rather be in my own position than in his," replied Claire firmly.

"You would!" His companion evinced surprise "He is in the sure road to wealth."

"But not, I fear, in the way to happiness."

"How can you say that, Edward?"

"No man, who, in the eager pursuit of money so far forgets the rights of others as to trample on them, can be in the way to happiness."

"Then you think he tramples on the rights of others?"

"I know but little, if any thing, about him," replied Claire; "but this I do know, that unless Leonard Jasper be a different man from what he was five years ago, fair dealing between man and man is a virtue in a clerk that would in nowise recommend him to the position of an associate in business. His partner must be shrewd, sharp, and unscrupulous—a lover of money above every thing else—a

man determined to rise, no matter who is trampled down or destroyed in the ascent."

"In business circles such men are by no means scarce."

"I am aware of it."

"And it is unhesitatingly affirmed by many whom I know, that, as the world now is, no really honest man can trade successfully."

"That is more than I am ready to admit."

"The sharpest and shrewdest get on the best."

"Because it is easier to be sharp and shrewd than to be intelligent, persevering, industrious, patient, and self-denying. The eagerness to get rich fast is the bane of trade. I am quite ready to admit that no man can get rich at railroad speed, and not violate the law of doing as you would be done by."

"Doing as you would be done by! O dear!" said the friend; "you certainly don't mean to bring that law down into the actual life of the world?"

"It would be a happier world for all of us if this law were universally obeyed."

"That may be. But, where all are selfish, how is it possible to act from an unselfish principle?"

"Do you approve of stealing?" said Claire, with some abruptness.

"Of course not," was the half-indignant answer.

"I need not have asked the question, for I now remember to have seen the fact noticed in one of our papers, that an unfaithful domestic in your family had been handed over to the police."

"True. She was a thief. We found in her

trunk a number of valuable articles that she had stolen from us."

"And you did right. You owed this summary justice as well to the purloiner as to the public. Now, there are many ways of stealing, besides this direct mode. If I deprive you of your property with design, I steal from you. Isn't that clear?"

"Certainly."

"And I am, to use plain words, a thief. Well, now take this easily to be understood case. I have a lot of goods to sell, and you wish to purchase them. In the trade I manage to get from you, through direct misrepresentation, or in a tacit advantage of your ignorance, more than the goods are really worth. Do I not cheat you?"

"Undoubtedly."

"And having purposely deprived you of a portion of your money, am I not a thief?"

"In all that goes to make up the morality of the case, you are."

"The truth, unquestionably. Need I proceed further? By your own admission, every business-man who takes undue advantage of another in dealing, steals."

"Pretty close cutting, that, friend Claire. It wouldn't do to talk that right out at all times and in all places."

"Why not?"

"I rather think it would make some people feel bad; and others regard themselves as insulted."

"I can believe so. But we are only talking this between ourselves. And now I come back to my rather abrupt question—Do you approve of steal-

ing? No, you say, as a matter of course. And yet, you but just now were inclined to justify sharp dealing, on the ground that all were sharpers—quoting the saying of some, that no honest man could trade successfully in the present time. For the direct stealing of a few articles of trifling value, you hand a poor, ignorant domestic over to the police, yet feel no righteous indignation against the better-taught man of business, who daily robs his customers in some one form or another."

"You are too serious by far, Edward," returned his companion, forcing a laugh. "Your mind has fallen into a morbid state. But you will get over this one of these times. Good evening! Our ways part here. Good evening!"

And the young man turned off abruptly.

"A morbid state," mused Claire to himself, as he continued on alone. "So thousands would say. But is it so? Is honesty or dishonesty the morbid state? How direct a question! How plain the answer! Honesty is health—dishonesty the soul's sickness. To be honest, is to live in obedience to social and divine laws; dishonesty is the violation of these. Is it possible for a diseased body to give physical enjoyment? No! Nor can a diseased mind give true mental enjoyment. To seek happiness in the possession of wealth obtained through wrong to the neighbour, is as fruitless as to seek bodily pleasure in those practices which inevitably destroy the health. To me, this is self-evident, and may God give me strength to live according to my clear convictions!"

The very earnestness with which Claire mentally

confirmed himself in his honest convictions, and especially his upward looking for strength in conscious weakness, showed that his mind was in temptation. He had felt somewhat depressed during the day, in view of his external relation to the world; and this feeling was increased by his observation of the fact that Parker had been advanced to the position of a partner to his old employer. It seemed like a reward for unfair dealing, while honesty was suffered to remain poor. The young man's enlightened reason—enlightened during five years' earnest search after and practice of higher truths than govern in the world's practice—strongly combated all the false arguments that were presented to his mind, during this season of his overshadowing. The combat was severe, and still continued on his arrival at home—causing his mind to be in a measure depressed.

CHAPTER X.

The increase of Claire's family had caused him, some time before, to remove from the two comfortable rooms in which were passed the first pleasant years of his married life. He now occupied a small house in a retired street, the rent of which, though moderate, drew pretty heavily on his income. But he had managed, through the prudent co-operation of his wife, not only to keep even with the world, but to lay by a small sum of money.

Few homes, in the large city wherein dwelt this obscure family, were so full of all the elements of happiness. If, sometimes, the spirit of Claire was overshadowed by passing clouds—as would unavoidably happen from his contact with the world, and his own variant states—the evening's return to the bosom of his family, generally made all bright again.

Little Fanny Elder, now ten years of age, had been steadily growing into his affections from the first. It is questionable whether his love for his own children was a purer passion. Older, by several years, than Edith, she had been to him more companionable; and had ever greeted his return at evening with warmer expressions of pleasure than were manifested by Edith, or the two younger children who had been added to the number of his household treasures.

On this evening, as Claire drew nearer and nearer to his home, and his thoughts began to make pictures of the scene within, its light and warmth penetrated his feelings, and when he opened, at length, the door, he was himself again.

First to bound into his arms was Fanny Elder What a beautiful, fairy-like creature she was! How more than fulfilled the promise of her early childhood! Next came Edith, now six years of age, side by side with her brother Harry, a wild little rogue, and were only a few seconds behind Fanny in throwing themselves upon their father; while little baby Mary, as she sat on the carpet, fluttered her tiny arms, and crowed out her joyous welcome.

What a merry romp they all had for the next two or three minutes. When quiet came back again,

baby was sitting on one knee, Harry on the other, and Fanny leaning her face on the shoulder of her "father"—for so she called him with the rest—while her glossy curls were resting in sunny clusters upon his bosom. The memory of the child's former home and parents seemed to have faded almost entirely. If the past ever came back to her, like a dream, with its mingled web of sunshine and tears, she never spoke of it. Fully had she been taken into the hearts and home of her new parents; and she rested there as one having a right to her position.

And the pure spirit who presided over this little Paradise, where was she? Present—observing all, and sharing in the delight her husband's return had occasioned. The expected kiss had not long been kept from her loving lips.

Happy household! What have its inmates to envy in those around them? Within the circle of many squares were none so rich in all the elements of happiness.

Soon after the evening meal was over, the children, after another merry romp with their father, went off to bed. When Mrs. Claire returned from the chamber, whither she had accompanied them, she held a letter in her hand.

"I had forgotten all about this letter, Edward," said she. "It was left here for you, this afternoon."

Claire took the letter and broke the seal, running his eye down to the signature as he unfolded it.

"Leonard Jasper! What is this?"

His brow contracted instantly, as he commenced reading the letter. It was brief, and in these words—

"MR. EDWARD CLAIRE—*Sir:* From this time I will relieve you of the burden of my ward, Fanny Elder. Mrs. Jasper and myself have determined to take her into our own family, in order that we may give the needful care to her education. Call around and see me to-morrow, and we will arrange this matter. Yours, &c. LEONARD JASPER."

The face of the young man had become pale by the time he had finished reading this letter; but that of his wife, who did not yet know a word of its contents, was almost white—the effect produced on her husband filling her with a vague alarm.

"What is it, Edward?" she asked, in a low, eager whisper.

"Jasper wants us to give up Fanny"

Edith sank into a chair, exclaiming—

"Oh, Edward!"

"But she is only ten years of age," said the husband, "and our contract is to keep her until she is twelve."

"We cannot give her up," murmured Edith, tears already beginning to flow over her cheeks. "I never thought of this. What can it mean?"

"Some sudden determination on the part of Jasper, and based on nothing good," was the reply. "But, as I said, our contract is binding until Fanny is twelve years of age, and I will never consent to its being broken. He was over anxious to hold me in writing. He did not value his own word, and would not trust mine. It was well. The dear child shall remain where she is."

"But, after she is twelve, Edward? What then?

Oh, I can never part with her," said Mrs. Claire, now weeping freely.

"Two years will pass ere that time. Jasper may have other purposes in view when our present contract expires."

"You will see him in the morning?"

"O yes. I must understand all about this matter. What can it mean? 'Needful care to her education!' A mere hypocritical pretence. What does he care for her, or her education? What, in fact, does he know of her? Nothing at all. Has he ever called to see her? Has he ever made the first inquiry after her? No. There is something wrong, without doubt. This movement bodes no good to our dear child. But she has one friend who will stand between her and harm—who will protect her, if need be, at the risk of his own life."

Claire, as his words indicate, had suffered himself to become much excited. Seeing this, his wife recovered, to some extent, her own self-possession, and spoke to him soothingly.

"We will wait and see what it means," said she. "Mr. Jasper cannot force her away from us now, if he would."

"After seeing him to-morrow, you can understand better what we are to expect. This note may have been written from some momentary feeling. I cannot think that he has a settled purpose to take the child from us."

"Time will show," was the abstracted response.

Not for years had so unhappy an evening been spent by Edward Claire and his wife; and when

they retired, it was to pass the night in broken intervals of sleep.

Early on the next morning, Claire called at the store of Jasper, who received him with cold politeness, and at once came to the matter uppermost in both their thoughts, by saying—

"You received my note?"

"I did," was the reply.

"Well? All right, I suppose?"

"Fanny is not twelve years of age yet!"

"Isn't she? Well, what of that?" There was some impatience in the manner of Jasper.

"I agreed to take the care of her until she was twelve."

"Well—well—suppose you did? I'm her guardian, and wish to have her now in my own family. If you agreed to keep her, I did not say that she should positively remain."

"There was a contract signed to that effect," firmly replied Claire.

"A contract! Humph! Are you sure?"

"Very sure. You drew it yourself."

"Have you a copy of it?"

"I have."

Jasper seemed thrown aback by this. He had not forgotten the contract, for all his affected ignorance thereof. He only hoped that Edward had, through carelessness, lost his copy. But he was mistaken.

"A contract! A contract?" said Jasper, as if communing with his own thoughts. "I do remember, now, something of the kind. And so there was a written contract?"

"Yes, sir; and I have a copy in your own hand."

"And I am to understand, Edward, that notwithstanding my wish, as the child's legal guardian, and, therefore, the representative of her parents, to have her in my own family, that you will interpose a hasty-signed contract?"

"Mr. Jasper," said the young man, changing his manner, "we have had this child in our family for over five years, and have grown strongly attached to her. In fact, she seems to us as one of our own children; and we, to her, are in the place of parents. To remove her would, therefore, be doing a great violence to our feelings, and I know it would make her unhappy. Let her remain where she is, and you may rest assured that she will be cared for as tenderly as our own."

"No, Edward, it is no use to talk of that," replied Jasper, positively. "I wish, now, to have her in my own family, and trust that you will not stand for a moment in the way."

"But, Mr. Jasper"——

"It will be of no avail to argue the point, Edward," said the merchant, interrupting him. "I was fully in earnest when I wrote to you, and am no less in earnest now. I am certainly entitled to the possession of my ward, and will not bear, patiently, any attempt on your part to deprive me of that right."

There was an angry quivering of the lips, and a stern knitting of the brows, on the part of Jasper, as he closed this emphatic sentence. Claire felt excited, yet was so fully conscious of the necessity of self-control, that he quieted down his feelings, and endeavoured to think calmly.

"Well, what do you say?" imperatively demanded Jasper, after waiting some moments for a reply.

"We cannot part with the child," said the young man, in a low, appealing voice.

"You *must* part with her!" was the quick, resolute response.

"Must? That is a strong word, Mr. Jasper." Claire's manner underwent another change, as was shown by the firm compression of his lips, and the steady gaze of his eyes, as he fixed them on the merchant.

"I know it is strong, but no stronger than my purpose; and I warn you not to stand in my way I've got an old grudge against you, so don't provoke me too far in this matter. A pretty affair, indeed, when *you* attempt to come between me and my legal rights and duties."

"Duties!" There was a stinging contempt in the young man's voice. The manner of Jasper had chafed him beyond all manner of self-control.

"You forget to whom you are speaking," said the latter, offended now, as well as angry. "But we will not bandy words. Will you, without further trouble, give into my hands the child of Mr. Elder?"

"I cannot do it, Mr. Jasper."

"Speak positively. Will you, or will you not do as I wish?"

"I will not," was the decided answer.

"Enough." And Jasper turned away, muttering in an undertone, "We'll soon see who is to be master here."

Claire lingered a short time, but, as Jasper showed

no disposition to renew the conversation, he left the store, greatly disturbed and troubled in his mind.

CHAPTER XI.

When Edward Claire and his wife drew together on the evening of that day, after the children were in bed, both were calmer than at their previous interview on a subject that necessarily brought with it strong excitement of feeling. Both had thought much and felt much, and were now prepared to look calmly at the new relation affairs had so suddenly assumed. At dinner-time, Edward had related the substance of his interview with Jasper.

"What can he do?" asked Edith, referring now to the muttered threat of that individual.

"I don't know that he can do any thing more than withhold the regular sums heretofore paid for the support of Fanny. If he does that, I will collect them legally."

"Can't he take her away by force? Won't the law compel us to give her up?" asked Edith, in a troubled voice.

"Our contract gives us a right to her possession until she is twelve years of age. In that, the law will undoubtedly sustain us."

"The law is very uncertain, Edward."

"But our contract is plainly worded, and, in this State, private written contracts between parties to an agreement are good in law. At best, however,

we can only keep her two years longer; that is what troubles me most."

"We must do our duty by her," said Edith, endeavouring to speak calmly, "during that time; and wean our hearts from her as much as possible, so that the giving of her up, when it has to be done, will cause as little grief as possible. Poor child! It will be hard for her to leave us, and go to her new home. That thought is beginning to pain me most."

"And such a home! I have seen Mrs. Jasper frequently, and, if my observation is correct, she is no true woman. Dress, it seemed to me, was all she cared for; and there was a captiousness and ill-temper about her, at times, that was, to say the least of it, very unbecoming."

"And to her care we must resign this precious one," said Edith, with a sigh. "Oh, how the thought pains me! Dear, dear child!"

"The time is yet distant," remarked Claire—"distant by nearly two years. Let it be our duty to prepare her as fully for the new relation as possible. Two years is a long time—many changes will take place, and among them, it may be, a change in the purpose of Mr. Jasper. We will hope for this, at least; yet wisely prepare for a different result."

"As things now appear, I do not see what else remains for us to do. Ah me! How like lightning from a summer sky has this flashed suddenly over us. But, Edward, we must not, in the strong trial of our natural feelings, permit ourselves to forget that dear Fanny is in the

higher guardianship of One who is infinitely wise and good. If she is to pass from our care to that of Mr. Jasper and his family, it is through His permission, and He will bring out of it good to all."

"I can see that in my understanding, Edith," replied her husband; "but, it is hard to *feel* that it is so."

"Very hard, Edward. Yet, it is something—a great deal—to have the truth to lean upon, even though it seems to bend under our weight. Oh! without this truth, it seems as if I would now fall to the ground helpless. But, let us try and view this painful subject in its brightest aspect. It is our duty to the child to keep her, if we can, until she passes her twelfth year."

"Clearly," replied the husband.

"And you think we can do so?"

"We have two advantages—possession and a written contract guaranteeing the possession."

"True."

"These on our side, I think we have little to fear from Jasper. The great trial will come afterward."

To this conclusion, that is, to retain Fanny until her twelfth year, if possible—they came, after once more carefully reviewing the whole subject; and, resting here, they patiently awaited the result.

With what a new interest was the child regarded from this time! How the hearts of Claire and his wife melted toward her on all occasions! She seemed to grow, daily, more and more into their af-

fections; and, what to them appeared strange—it might only have been imagination—manifested a more clinging tenderness, as if conscious of the real truth.

Weeks elapsed and nothing further was heard from Jasper. Claire and his wife began to hope that he would make no attempt to separate Fanny from them; at least not until her twelfth year. Let us turn to him, and see what he is doing, or proposing to do, in the case.

Two or three days subsequent to the time when Claire received the notification from Jasper, just referred to, two men sat, in close conference, in the office of an attorney noted for his legal intelligence, but more noted for his entire want of principle. For a good fee, he would undertake any case, and gain for his client, if possible, no matter how great the wrong that was done. His name was Grind. The two men here introduced, were this lawyer and Jasper.

"Do you really think," said the latter, "that, in the face of my guardianship, he can retain possession of the child?"

"He has, you say, a copy of this contract?" Grind held a sheet of paper in his hand.

"Yes. To think that I was such a fool as to bind myself in this way! But I did not dream, for a moment, that things were going to turn up as they have."

"It is a contract that binds you both," said the lawyer, "and I do not see that you can go round it."

"I must go round it!" replied Jasper, warmly. "You know all the quirks and windings of the law, and I look to you for help in this matter. The possession of that child, is, to me, a thing of the first importance."

"After two years she will come into your hands without trouble, Mr. Jasper. Why not wait?"

"Wait! I will not hear the word. No! no! I must have her now."

"The law will not give her to you, Mr. Jasper," returned Grind, with the utmost self-possession. "The contract is clearly expressed; and it is binding."

"Is there no way to accomplish my end?" said Jasper, impatiently. "There must be. I cannot be foiled in this matter. Even pride would forbid this. But, there are stronger motives than pride at work now."

"Can you allege ill-treatment against the young man or his wife? Or neglect of your ward's comfort? Have they failed to do their duty by her in any respect?"

"I should not wonder; but, unfortunately, I can prove nothing."

"You might call for an investigation."

"And if every thing was proved right on their part?"

"The court would, most probably, return the child to their care. I am ready to take all necessary steps for you; but, Mr. Jasper, I very strongly incline to the opinion that the least noise you make in this matter, the better. Couldn't you—for a consideration in money, for instance—overcome

the reluctance of Claire and his wife to part with the child? Honey, you know, catches more flies than vinegar."

"Buy him off, you mean?"

"Yes."

"No—no! I hate him too cordially for that. He's a villain in disguise; that's my opinion of him. A low, canting hypocrite. Buy him off for money. Oh no!"

"Could he be bought?" asked the lawyer.

"Could he?" A flush of surprise lit up, for a moment, the face of Jasper. "What a question for *you* to ask. Hasn't every man his price? Bought! Yes, I could buy him fifty times over."

"Then do so, and in the quietest manner. That is my advice."

"I'll steal the child!" exclaimed Jasper, rising up in his excitement, and moving uneasily about the room.

Grind shook his head, as he replied—

"All folly. No man ever did a wise thing while he was in a passion. You must permit yourself to cool down a great many degrees before you can act judiciously in this matter."

"But to be thwarted by him!" An expression of the deepest disgust was in the face of Jasper.

"All very annoying, of course," was the response of Grind. "Still, where we can't make things bend exactly to our wishes, it is generally the wisest policy to bend a little ourselves. We often, in this way, gain a purchase that enables us to bring all over to our side."

It must not be supposed that Grind, in giving his

client advice that was to prevent an appeal to law, did so from any unselfish friendliness. Nothing of the kind. He saw a great deal to gain, beyond; and, in his advice, regarded his own interests quite as much as he did those of Jasper. He was not, however, at this interview, able to induce the merchant to attempt to settle the matter with Claire by compromise. The most he could do was to get him to promise, that, for the present, he would make no effort to get the person of the child into his possession.

Jasper, when he left his lawyer, was less satisfied with him than he had ever been. In previous cases, he had found Grind ready to prosecute or defend, and to promise him the fullest success—though success did not always come.

Several more consultations were held during the succeeding two or three weeks, and, finally, Jasper was brought over fully to his lawyer's way of thinking.

CHAPTER XII.

The minds of Claire and his wife were yet in a state of suspense, when, some weeks after the first interview, the former received a politely worded note from Jasper, requesting him to call at his store. He went, accordingly, and Jasper received him with marked suavity and kindness of manner, and, after making a few inquiries about his family, said—

"Edward: I believe I must confess to having been a little over-excited at our last interview. The fact is, I had forgotten all about that contract; and when you brought it to my mind so abruptly, I was thrown somewhat off of my guard, and said things for which I have since felt regret. So let what is past go. I now wish to have another talk with you about Fanny Elder. How is the child?"

"She is very well."

"And she has grown, I presume, finely?"

"Yes. She's now quite a stout girl."

"What kind of a child is she? Docile and obedient?"

"None could be more so. A sweeter disposition I have never seen."

"How are you getting on now, Edward?" Mr. Jasper's voice was kind and insinuating.

"Comfortably," was answered.

"What is your salary?"

There was a momentary hesitation on the part of Claire, and then he replied—

"Five hundred dollars."

"Is that all? I was under the impression that you received a thousand. I am very certain that some one told me so. Too little, Edward—too little. You are worth more than that to any one. Are you acquainted at Edgar & Co.'s?"

"No."

"I wish you were. One of their young men is going to leave, and they will have to fill his place immediately. The salary is twelve hundred."

Claire's heart gave a quick bound.

"Shall I speak to Edgar for you?" added the merchant.

"If you will do so, Mr. Jasper," said Edward, with a sudden earnestness of manner, "I shall be greatly indebted to you. I find it a little difficult to get along on five hundred dollars a year."

"How much family have you now?"

"Three children."

"Indeed. Oh yes, you should have a higher salary. I know you would just suit Edgar & Co., and I think the place may be secured for you."

A few moments of silence followed, and then Jasper resumed—

"But, as just said, I wish to talk with you about this ward of mine. Your salary is so light that you, no doubt, find the income received through her quite a help to you?"

"No—no," replied Claire; "it costs for her boarding, clothes, schooling, etc., quite as much as we receive."

"It does?" Jasper manifested some surprise.

"Oh yes. We have no wish to make any profit out of her."

"That being the case, Edward," said the merchant, "why are you so reluctant to give her up?"

"Because," was the reply, "both myself and wife have become strongly attached to her. In fact, she seems like one of our own children."

"When she is twelve, you know," Edward, returned Jasper, "you will have to resign her. Our agreement only extends to that time." He spoke in a mild, insinuating, friendly tone of voice. So much so, in fact, that Claire, well as he knew

him, was partially deceived and thrown off of his guard.

"True; unless you have seen reason by that time, which we hope will be the case, to let her remain in her present home. Believe me, Mr. Jasper,"—Claire spoke earnestly—"that Fanny will take the parting very hard, if ever it comes."

"As come it must, Edward, sooner or later," was the mild, yet firm response.

"Are you so earnest about this, Mr. Jasper? I have flattered myself that you did not really care a great deal about having Fanny."

"I am entirely in earnest, Edward," was the reply. "I may have seemed to you indifferent about this child, but such has not been the case. I have feelings and purposes in regard to her which I cannot explain, but which are near my heart. I se your position and that of your wife, and I feel for you. If compatible with what I conceive to be my duty, I would let her remain under your care. But such is not the case. Surely, it will be far better for both you and Fanny for the change that must come to be made now."

The calm, kind, insinuating manner of Jasper disarmed Claire, and made him wish that he could meet the desire of his old employer, without the painful breach in his home circle which must be the consequence. With his eyes cast upon the floor, he sat silently communing with his own thoughts for some time. The announcement of a vacancy in the house of Edgar & Co., and the offer to try and get the situation for him, had flattered his mind considerably. If he did not make some compromise in the

present case, he could count nothing on the influence of Jasper. But, how could he compromise? There was but one way—to give up Fanny—and that he was not prepared to do.

Seeing that the young man remained silent, Jasper said—

"Edward, I will make you this very liberal offer. Understand, now, that I am deeply in earnest—that the possession of Fanny is a thing of great moment to me; and that to gain this desired object, I am prepared to go very far. If you will meet me in a spirit of compromise, I will become as I was some years ago, your friend; and I have the ability to aid any one materially. As just said, I will make you this liberal offer:—Let me have the child now, and for the next two years I will pay you the same that you have been receiving for her maintenance."

Claire lifted his head quickly. There was already a flush on his cheeks and a sharp light in his eyes.

"Stay—one moment," interrupted Jasper, who saw by the motion of his lips that he was about replying. "I will pay you the whole sum, six hundred dollars, in advance, and, in addition thereto, pledge myself to procure for you, within three months, a situation worth a thousand dollars per annum, at least."

This was too broad an attempt to buy over the young man, and it failed. Starting to his feet, with a feeling of indignation in his heart so strong that he could not repress it, he answered, with knit brows and eyes fixed sternly and steadily on the merchant—

"Leonard Jasper! I thought you knew me better! I am not to be bought with your money."

As sudden was the change that passed over the merchant. He, too, sprang to his feet, and conscious that his offer of bribery, which he had humiliated himself to make, had failed, with clenched hand and set teeth, he fairly hissed out—

"You'll rue this day and hour, Edward Claire—rue it even to the moment of death! I will never forget nor forgive the wrong and insult. Don't think to escape me—don't think to foil me. The child is mine by right, and I will have her, come what will."

Feeling how useless it would be to multiply words, Claire turned away and left the store. He did not go home immediately, as he had thought of doing, in order to relieve the suspense of his wife, who was, he knew, very anxious to learn for what purpose Jasper had sent for him; but went to his place of business and laid the whole substance of his interview before his fast friend, Mr. Melleville, whose first response was one of indignation at the offer made by Jasper to buy him over to his wishes with money. He then said—

"There is something wrong here, depend upon it. Was there much property left by the child's parents?"

"Two houses in the city."

"Was that all?"

"All, I believe, of any value. There was a tract of land somewhere in the State, taken for debt; but it was considered of little account."

"Regard for the child has nothing to do with this movement," remarked Mr. Melleville. "The character of Jasper precludes the supposition."

"Entirely. What can it mean? The thing comes on me so suddenly that I am bewildered."

Claire was distressed.

"You are still firm in your purpose to keep Fanny until she is twelve years old?"

"As firm as ever, Mr. Melleville. I love the child too well to give her up. If a higher good to her were to be secured, then I might yield—then it would be my duty to yield. But, now, every just and humane consideration calls on me to abide by my purpose—and there I will abide."

"In my mind you are fully justified," was the reply of Mr. Melleville. "Keep me fully advised of every thing that occurs, and I will aid you as far as lies in my power. To-day I will call upon Edgar & Co., and do what I can toward securing for you the place said by Jasper to be vacant. I presume that I have quite as much influence in this quarter as he has."

CHAPTER XIII.

Scarcely had Edward Claire left the store of Jasper, ere the latter went out hurriedly, and took his way to the office of Grind, the lawyer, to whom he said, as he entered—

"It's just as I feared. The miserable wretch proved as intractable as iron." Jasper was not only strongly excited, but showed, in his voice and manner, that he had suffered no ordinary disappointment.

"Couldn't you buy him over?" There was a

mixture of surprise and incredulity in the lawyer's tones.

"No," was the emphatic response.

"That's strange! He's poor?"

"He gets five hundred a year, and has a wife and three children to support."

"Why didn't you tempt him with the offer to get him a place worth a thousand?"

"I did."

"With what effect?"

"He wouldn't give up the child."

"Humph!"

"Isn't it too bad, that a mean-souled fellow like him should stand in our way at such a point of time? I could spurn him with my foot! Hah!"

And Jasper clenched his teeth and scowled malignantly.

"I am disappointed, I confess, said Grind. "But angry excitement never helped a cause, good or bad. We must have possession of this child somehow. Martin came down from Reading this morning. I saw him but an hour ago."

"Indeed! What does he say?"

"The indications of coal are abundant. He made very careful examinations at a great number of points. In several places he found it cropping out freely; and the quality, as far as he was able to judge, is remarkably good."

"Will he keep our secret?" said Jasper.

"It is his interest to do so."

"We must make it his interest, in any event. No time is now to be lost."

"I agree with you there. A single week's delay

may ruin every thing. The coal is our discovery, and we are, in all equity, entitled to the benefit."

"Of course we are. It's a matter of speculation, at best; the lucky win. If we can get an order for the sale, we shall win handsomely. But, without producing the child, it will be next to impossible to get the order. So we must have her, by fair means or by foul."

"We must," said the lawyer, compressing his lips firmly.

"And have her now."

"Now," responded Grind.

Jasper rose to his feet.

"It's easy enough to say what we must have," remarked Grind, "but the means of gaining our ends are not always at hand. What do you propose doing?"

"I shall get the child."

"Don't act too precipitately. Violence will excite suspicion, and suspicion is a wonderful questioner."

"We must play a desperate game, as things now are, or not play at all," said Jasper.

"True; but the more desperate the game, the more need of coolness, forethought, and circumspection. Don't forget this. How do you mean to proceed?"

"That is yet to be determined."

"Will you make another effort to influence Claire?"

"No."

"Do you regard him as altogether impracticable?"

"No influence that I can bring would move him."

"You will, then, resort to stratagem or force?"

"One or the other—perhaps both. The child we must have."

"Let me beg of you, Jasper, to be prudent. There is a great deal at stake."

"I know there is; and the risk increases with every moment of delay."

Grind showed a marked degree of anxiety.

"If the child were in our possession now," said Jasper, "or, which is the same, could be produced when wanted, how soon might an order for the sale be procured?"

"In two or three weeks, I think," replied the lawyer.

"Certain preliminary steps are necessary?"

"Yes."

"If these were entered upon forthwith, how soon would the child be wanted?"

"In about ten days."

"Very well. Begin the work at once. When the child is needed, I will see that she is forthcoming. Trust me for that. I never was foiled yet in any thing that I set about accomplishing, and I will not suffer myself to be foiled here."

With this understanding, Jasper and the lawyer parted.

A week or more passed, during which time Claire heard nothing from the guardian of Fanny; and both he and his wife began to hope that no further attempt to get her into his possession would be made, until the child had reached her twelfth year.

It was in the summer-time, and Mrs. Claire sat, late in the afternoon of a pleasant day, at one of

the front-windows of her dwelling, holding her youngest child in her arms.

"The children are late in coming home from school," said she, speaking aloud her thought. "I wonder what keeps them!"

And she leaned out of the window, and looked for some time earnestly down the street.

But the children were not in sight. For some five or ten minutes Mrs. Claire played with and talked to the child in her arms; then she bent from the window again, gazing first up and then down the street.

"That's Edie, as I live!" she exclaimed. "But where is Fanny?"

As she uttered this inquiry, a sudden fear fell like a heavy weight on her heart. Retiring from the window, she hastened to the door, where, by this time, a lady stood holding little Edie by the hand. The child's eyes were red with weeping.

"Is this your little girl?" asked the lady.

"Oh, mamma! mamma!" cried Edie, bursting into tears, as she sprang to her mother's side and hid her face in her garments.

"Where did you find her, ma'am? Was she lost?" asked Mrs. Claire, looking surprised as well as alarmed. "Won't you walk in, ma'am?" she added, before there was time for a reply.

The lady entered, on this invitation, and when seated in Mrs. Claire's little parlour, related that while walking through Washington Square, she noticed the child she had brought home, crying bitterly. On asking her as to the cause of her distress, she said that she wanted Fanny: and then ran

away to some distance along the walks, searching for her lost companion. The lady's interest being excited, she followed and persuaded the child to tell her where she lived. After remaining some time longer in the square, vainly searching for Fanny, she was induced to let the lady take her home. After hearing this relation, Mrs. Claire said to Edith, in as calm a voice as she could assume, in order that the child might think without the confusion of mind consequent upon excitement—

"Where is Fanny, dear?"

"She went with the lady to buy some candies," replied the child.

"What lady?" asked the mother.

"The lady who took us to the square."

"The lady who took you to the square?" said the mother, repeating the child's words from the very surprise they occasioned

"Yes, mamma," was the simple response.

"What lady was it?"

"I don't know. She met us as we were coming home from school, and asked us to go down and walk in the square. She knew Fanny."

"How do you know, dear?" asked Mrs. Claire.

"Oh, she called her Fanny; and said what a nice big girl she was growing to be."

"And so you went down to the square with her?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And what then?"

"We walked about there for a little while, and then the lady told me to wait while she took Fanny to the candy-store to buy some candy. I waited.

and waited ever so long; but she didn't come back, and then I cried."

The meaning of all this, poor Mrs. Claire understood but too well. With what a shock it fell upon her. She asked no further question. What need was there? Edie's artless story made every thing clear. Fanny had been enticed away by some one employed by Jasper, and was now in his possession! With pale face and quivering lips, she sat bending over Edie, silent for several moments. Then recollecting herself, she said to the lady—

"I thank you, ma'am, most sincerely, for the trouble you have taken in bringing home my little girl. This is a most distressing affair. The other child has, evidently, been enticed away."

"You will take immediate steps for her recovery," said the lady.

"Oh, yes. I expect my husband home, now, every moment."

While she was yet speaking, Claire came in. Seeing the white face of his wife, he exclaimed—

"Mercy, Edith! What has happened?"

Edith could only murmur the word "Fanny," as she started forward, and buried her face, sobbing, on his bosom.

"Fanny! What of her? Oh, Edith! speak!'

The agitation of the wife was, for the time, too overpowering to admit of words, and so Claire turned to the lady and said, hurriedly—

"Will you tell me, madam, what has happened?"

"It appears, sir," she replied, "that a strange lady enticed the children to Washington Square, on their way from school"——

"And then carried off our dear, dear Fanny!" sobbed out Edith.

"Carried off Fanny!" exclaimed Claire.

"This lady," said Edith, growing calmer, "found our little Edie crying, in the square, and brought her home. Edie says the lady took them down there, and then told her to wait until she went with Fanny to buy some candies. They went, but did not return."

The meaning of all this was quite as clear to the mind of Edward Claire as it was to his wife. He understood, likewise, that this was the work of Jasper, and that Fanny was now in his possession. What was to be done?"

"Our first step," said Claire, after the stranger had retired, "must be to ascertain, if possible, whether what we believe to be true in regard to Fanny is really true. We must know certainly, whether she be really in the hands of Mr. Jasper."

"Where else can she be?" asked Edith, a new fear throwing its quick flash into her face.

"We, naturally," replied her husband, "take it for granted that Mr. Jasper has put his threat into execution. There is a bare possibility that such is not the case; and we must not rest until we have, on this point, the most absolute certainty."

"For what other purpose could she have been enticed away?" said Mrs. Claire, her face again blanching to a deadly paleness.

"We know nothing certain, Edith; and while this is the case, we cannot but feel a double anxiety. But, I must not linger here. Be as calm as possible, my dear wife, in this painful trial. I will go

at once to Mr. Jasper, and learn from him whether he has the child."

"Go quickly, Edward," said Edith. "Oh! it will be such a relief to have a certainty; to know even that she is in his hands."

Without further remark, Claire left his house and hurried off to the store of Jasper. The merchant was not there. From one of his clerks he learned his present residence, which happened not to be far distant. Thither he went, and, on asking to see him, was told by the servant that he was not at home. He then inquired for Mrs. Jasper, who, on being summoned, met him in one of the parlours. The manner of Claire was very much agitated, and he said, with an abruptness that evidently disconcerted the lady—

"Good evening, madam! My name is Claire. You remember me, of course?"

The lady bowed coldly, and with a frown on her brow.

"Is little Fanny Elder here?" was asked, and with even greater abruptness.

"Fanny Elder? No! Why do you ask that question?"

There was something so positive in the denial of Mrs. Jasper, that Claire felt her words as truth.

"Not here?" said he, catching his breath in a gasping manner. "Not here?"

"I said that she was not here," was the reply.

"Oh, where then is she, madam?" exclaimed the young man, evincing great distress.

"How should I know? Is she not in your possession? What is the meaning of this, Mr. Claire?"

The lady spoke sternly, and with the air of one both offended and irritated.

"Somebody enticed her away, on her return from school this afternoon," said Claire. "Mr. Jasper said that he would have her; and my first and natural conclusion was that he had executed his threat. Oh, ma'am, if this be so, tell me, that my anxiety for the child's safety may have rest. As it is, I am in the most painful uncertainty. If she is here, I will feel, at least"——

"Have I not told you that she is not here, and that I know nothing of her," said Mrs. Jasper, angrily, interrupting the young man. "This is insolent."

"How soon do you expect Mr. Jasper home?" inquired Claire.

"Not for several days," replied Mrs. Jasper.

"Days! Is he not in the city?"

"No, sir. He left town yesterday."

Claire struck his hands together in disappointment and grief. This confirmed to him the lady's assertion that she knew nothing of Fanny. In that assertion she had uttered the truth.

Sadly disappointed, and in far deeper distress of mind than when he entered the house, Edward Claire retired. If Mr. Jasper left the city on the day previous, and his wife had, as he could not help believing, no knowledge whatever of Fanny, then the more distressing inference was that she had been enticed away by some stranger.

On his way home, Claire called again at the store of Jasper. It occurred to him to ask there as to his absence from the city. The reply he received was

in agreement with Mrs. Jasper's assertion. He had left town on the previous day.

"Where has he gone?" he inquired.

"To Reading, I believe," was the answer.

"Will he return soon?"

"Not for several days, I believe."

With a heavy heart, Claire bent his way homeward. He cherished a faint hope that Fanny might have returned. The hope was vain. Here he lingered but a short time. His next step was to give information to the police, and to furnish for all the morning papers an advertisement, detailing the circumstances attendant on the child's abduction. This done, he again returned home, to console, the best he could, his afflicted wife, and to wait the developments of the succeeding day.

Utterly fruitless were all the means used by Claire to gain intelligence of the missing child. Two days went by, yet not the least clue to the mystery of her absence had been found. There was no response to the newspaper advertisements: and the police confessed themselves entirely at fault.

Exhausted by sleepless anxiety, broken in spirit by this distressing affliction, and almost despairing in regard to the absent one, Mr. and Mrs. Claire were seated alone, about an hour after dark on the evening of the third day, when the noise of rumbling wheels ceased before their door. Each bent an ear, involuntarily, to listen, and each started with an exclamation, as the bell rang with a sudden jerk. Almost simultaneously, the noise of wheels was again heard, and a carriage rolled rapidly away.

Two or three quick bounds brought Claire to the door, which he threw open.

"Fanny!" he instantly exclaimed; and in the next moment the child was in his arms, clinging to him, and weeping for joy at her return.

With a wonderful calmness, Mrs. Claire received Fanny from her husband, murmuring as she did so, in a subdued, yet deeply gratified voice—

"O, God! I thank thee!"

But this calmness in a little while gave way, and her overstrained, but now joyful feelings, poured themselves forth in tears.

Poor child! She too had suffered during these three never-to-be-forgotten days, and the marks of that suffering were sadly visible in her pale, grief-touched countenance.

To the earnest inquiries of her foster-parents, Fanny could give no very satisfactory answer. She had no sooner left the square with the lady mentioned by little Edith, than she was hurried into a carriage, and driven off to the cars, where a man met them. This man, she said, spoke kindly to her, showed her his watch, and told her if she would be a good girl and not cry, he would take her home again. In the cars, they rode for a long time, until it grew dark; and still she said the cars kept going. After a while she fell asleep, and when she awoke it was morning, and she was lying on a bed. The same lady was with her, and, speaking kindly, told her not to be frightened—that nobody would hurt her, and that she should go home in a day or two.

"But I did nothing but cry," said the child, in

her own simple way, as she related her story. "Then the lady scolded me, until I was frightened, and tried to keep back the tears all I could. But they would run down my cheeks. A good while after breakfast," continued Fanny, "the man who had met us at the cars came in with another man. They talked with the lady for a good while, looking at me as they spoke. Then they all came around me, and one of the men said—

"'Don't be frightened, my little dear. No one will do you any harm; and if you will be a right good girl, and do just as we want you to do, you shall go home to-morrow.'

"I tried not to cry, but the tears came running down my face. Then the other man said sharply—

"'Come now, my little lady, we can't have any more of this! If you wish to go home again to-morrow, dry your tears at once. There! there! Hush all them sobs. No one is going to do you any harm.'

"I was so frightened at the way the man looked and talked, that I stopped crying at once.

"'There!' said he, 'that is something like. Now,' speaking to the lady, 'put on her things. It is time she was there.'

"I was more frightened at this, and the men saw it; so one of them told me not to be alarmed, that they were only going to show me a large, handsome house, and would then bring me right back; and that in the morning, if I would go with them now, and be a good girl, I should go home again.

"So I went with them, and tried my best not to cry. They brought me into a large house, and there were a good many men inside. The men all looked at me, and I was so frightened! Then they talked together, and one of them kept pointing toward me. At last I was taken back to the house, where I stayed all day and all night with the lady. This morning we got into the cars, and came back to the city. The lady took me to a large house in Walnut street, where I stayed until after dark, and then she brought me home in a carriage."

Such was the child's story; and greatly puzzled were Claire and his wife to comprehend its meaning. Their joy at her return was intense. She seemed almost as if restored to them from the dead. But, for what purpose had she been carried off; and who were the parties engaged in the act? These were questions of the deepest moment; yet difficult, if not impossible of solution—at least in the present. That Jasper's absence from the city was in some way connected with this business, Claire felt certain, the more he reflected thereon. But, that Fanny should be returned to him so speedily, if Jasper had been concerned in her temporary abduction, was something that he could not clearly understand. And it was a long time ere the mystery was entirely unravelled.

CHAPTER XIV.

From that time Claire and his wife heard no more from Jasper, who regularly paid the sums quarterly demanded for Fanny's maintenance. This demand was not now made in person by Claire. He sent a written order, which the guardian never failed to honour on the first presentation.

Mr. Melleville, according to promise, called upon the firm of Edgar & Co., in order to speak a good word for Edward; but learned, not a little to his surprise, that no vacancy was anticipated in the house.

"Mr. Jasper," said he, "told one of my young men that a clerk had left, or was about leaving you."

"It's a mistake," was the positive answer. "He may have meant some other firm."

"All a wicked deception on the part of Jasper," said Melleville to himself, as he left the store. "A lie told with sinister purpose. How given over to all baseness is the man!"

Claire was no little disappointed when this was told him; but his answer showed how he was gaining in just views of life; and how he could lean on right principles and find in them a firm support.

"I would rather," said he, "be the deceived than the deceiver. The one most wronged in this is

Leonard Jasper. Ah! is he not preparing for himself a sad future? As for me, I am more and more satisfied, every day, that all events, even to the most minute, are in the direction or permission of Providence; and that out of the very occurrences we deem afflictive and disastrous, will often arise our greatest good. For the moment I was disappointed; but now I feel that it is all right."

No change of marked importance occurred in the family of Claire during the next two years, to the close of which period both he and his wife looked with increasing earnestness of mind. Fanny had grown rapidly during this time, and was now tall for her age—and still very beautiful. In character she was every thing the fondest parents could desire.

At last came the child's twelfth birthday. Neither Clare nor his wife referred to the fact; though it was present to both their minds—present like an evil guest. Must they now give her up? Their hearts shrank and trembled at the bare idea. How plainly each read in the other's face the trouble which only the lips concealed!

Never had Fanny looked so lovely in the eyes of Claire as she did on that morning, when she bounded to his side and claimed a parting kiss, ere he left for his daily round of business. Could he give her up? The thought choked in their utterance the words of love that were on his lips, and he turned from her and left the house.

As Claire, on his way to Mr. Melleville's store, came into the more business portions of the city, his

thoughts on the child who was soon to be resigned, according to the tenor of his contract with her guardian, he was suddenly startled by seeing Jasper a short distance ahead, approaching from the direction in which he was going. Happening, at the moment, to be near a cross street, he turned off suddenly, in obedience to an instinct rather than a purpose, and avoided a meeting by going out of his way.

"How vain," he sighed to himself, as the throbbing of his heart grew less heavy and his thoughts ran clear. "I cannot so avoid this evil. It will most surely find me out. Dear, dear child! How shall we ever bear the parting!"

All day long Claire was in momentary dread of a visit or a communication from Jasper. But none came. A like anxiety had been suffered by his wife, and it showed itself in the pallor of her cheeks, and the heavy, almost tearful, drooping of her eyelids.

The next day and the next passed, and yet nothing was heard from the guardian. Now, the true guardians of the child began to breathe more freely. A week elapsed, and all remained as before. Another week was added; another and another. A month had gone by. And yet the days of a succeeding month came and went, the child still remaining in her old home.

Up to this time but brief allusions had been made by either Claire or his wife to the subject first in their thoughts. They avoided it, because each felt that the other would confirm, rather than allay, fears already too well defined.

"It is strange," said Claire, as he sat alone with

his wife one evening, some three months subsequent to the twelfth birthday of Fanny, "that we have heard nothing yet from Mr. Jasper."

Edith looked up quickly, and with a glance of inquiry, into his face; but made no answer.

"I've turned it over in my mind a great deal," resumed Claire, thoughtfully; "but with little or no satisfactory result. Once I thought I would call on him"——

"Oh, no, no! not for the world!" instantly exclaimed Edith.

"I see, with you, dear, that such a step would be imprudent. And, yet, this suspense—how painful it is!"

"Painful, it is true, Edward; yet, how in every way to be preferred to the certainty we so much dread."

"O yes—yes. I agree with you there." Then, after a pause, he said, "It is now three months since the time expired for which we agreed to keep Fanny."

"I know," was the sighing response.

They both remained silent, each waiting for the other to speak. The same thought was in the mind of each. Excited by the close pressure of want upon their income, Edward was first to give it voice.

"Mr. Jasper," said he, touching the subject at first remotely, "may have forgotten, in the pressure of business on his attention, the fact that Fanny is now twelve years old."

"So I have thought," replied Edith.

"If I send, as usual, for the sum heretofore regularly paid for her maintenance, it may bring this fact to his mind."

"I have feared as much," was the low, half-tremulous response.

"And yet, if I do not send, the very omission may excite a question, and produce the consequences we fear."

"True, Edward. All that has passed through my mind over and over again."

"What had we better do?"

"Ah!" sighed Edith, "if we only knew that."

"Shall I send the order, as usual?"

Edith shook her head, saying—

"I'm afraid."

"And I hesitate with the same fear."

"And yet, Edith," said Claire, who, as the provider for the family, pondered more anxiously the question of ways and means, "what are we to do? Our income, with Fanny's board added, is but just sufficient. Take away three hundred dollars a year, and where will we stand? The thought presses like a leaden weight on my feelings. Debt, or severe privation, is inevitable. If, with eight hundred dollars, we only come out even at the end of each year, what will be the result if our income is suddenly reduced to five hundred?"

"Let us do what is right, Edward," said his wife, laying her hand upon his arm, and looking into his face in her earnest, peculiar way. Her voice, though it slightly trembled, had in it a tone of confidence, which, with the words she had spoken, gave to the wavering heart of Claire an instant feeling of strength.

"But what is right, Edith?" he asked.

"We know not now," was her reply, "but, if we

earnestly desire to do right, true perceptions will be given."

"A beautiful faith; but oh, how hard to realize!"

"No, Edward, not so very hard. We have never found it so: have we?"

Love and holy confidence were in her eyes.

"We have had some dark seasons, Edith," said Claire sadly.

"But, through darkest clouds has come the sunbeam. Our feet have not wandered for want of light. Look back for a moment. How dark all seemed when the question of leaving Jasper's service came up for decision. And yet how clear a light shone when the time for action came. Have you ever regretted what was then done, Edward?"

"Not in a sane moment," replied the young man. "O no, no, Edith!" speaking more earnestly; "that, with one exception, was the most important act of my life."

"With one exception?" Edith spoke in a tone of inquiry.

"Yes." Claire's voice was very tender, and touched with a slight unsteadiness. The *most* important act of my life was"——

He paused and gazed lovingly into the face of his wife. She, now comprehending him, laid, with a pure thrill of joy pervading her bosom, her cheek to his—and thus, for the space of nearly a minute, they sat motionless.

"May God bless you, Edith!" said Claire at length, fervently, lifting his head as he spoke. "You are the good angel sent to go with me through life. Ah! but for you, how far from the true path might my

feet have strayed! And now," he added, more calmly, "we will look at the present difficulty steadily, and seek to know the right."

"The right way," said Edith, after she had to some extent repressed the glad pulses that leaped to her husband's loving words, "is not always the way in which we most desire to walk. Thorns, sometimes, are at its entrance. But it grows pleasanter afterward."

"If we can find the right way, Edith, we will walk in it because it is the right way."

"And we will surely find it if we seek in this spirit," returned the wife.

"What, then, had we best do?" asked Claire, his thought turning earnestly to the subject under consideration.

"What will be best for Fanny? That should be our first consideration," said his wife. "Will it be best for her to remain with us, or to go into Mr. Jasper's family?"

"That is certainly a grave question," returned Claire, seriously, "and must be viewed in many aspects. Mr. Jasper's place in the world is far different from mine. He is a wealthy merchant; I am a poor clerk. If she goes into his family, she will have advantages not to be found with us—advantages of education, society, and position in life. To keep her with us will debar her from all these. Taking this view of the case, Edith, I don't know that we have any right to keep her longer, particularly as Mr. Jasper has signified to us, distinctly, his wish, as her guardian, to take her into his own family, and superintend her education."

Edith bent her head, thoughtfully, for some moments. She then said—

"Do you believe that Mr. Jasper gave the true reason for wishing to have Fanny?"

"That he might superintend her education?"

"Yes."

"No, Edith, I do not. I believe a selfish motive alone influenced him."

"You have good reasons for so thinking?"

"The best of reasons. I need not repeat them; they are as familiar to you as they are to me."

"Do you believe that, under his superintendence, she will receive a better education than under ours?"

"She will, undoubtedly, Edith, if remaining with us she fails to bring the means of education. We are poor, Edith, and the claims of our own children—bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh—must not be forgotten."

A quick change passed over Edith. Her countenance became troubled. The difficulties in the way of retaining the child were suddenly magnified to her thoughts. Ah! how painfully did she feel that often the first steps in the way of duty are among thorns.

"Can we be just to Fanny and just also to our own children?" asked Claire.

"If we still received the old sum for her maintenance, we could. I would not ask its increase to the amount of a single dollar."

"Nor I, Edith. Were we certain of having this continued, there would be no doubt.'"

"There would be none in my mind. As for

the higher position in society which she would attain, as an inmate of Mr. Jasper's family, that might not be to her the greatest good; but prove the most direful evil. She could not be guarded there, in her entrance into life, as we would guard her. The same love would not surround her as a protecting sphere. I tremble at the thought, Edward. How great would be her danger! Fourfold would be her temptation, and tenfold her exposure."

"We will keep her," said Claire, firmly, as his wife ceased speaking. "She must not be so exposed. God has given her to us; she is our child, for we love her as tenderly as if she were of our own blood. When her mother was taken, God transferred the love she had borne her child into your bosom, and from that time you became her mother. No, Edith, we must not let her go forth, in her tender innocence. We love her as our own; let us share with her the best we have; let her become more really our own than she has yet been."

"If," said Edith, after some moments, "we lose the regular income from Mr. Jasper, Fanny will be deprived of most important advantages. Just now we are about adding materially to the cost of her education."

"I know," replied Edward. "But if the income is withheld?"

"We have not yet applied for it."

Claire looked, for some moments, steadily into his wife's face.

"You think, then, that we should make the usual application?"

"I have not said so, Edward. My mind is far from clear. Jasper may not, now, want the trouble of Fanny. He doubtless had some purpose to subserve when he demanded her; a purpose gained, probably, at the time of her mysterious removal from the city, which I have always believed was through his agency. If you were to send for the money, as usual, it is more than probable that he would pay it."

"But, if he should refuse, and demand the child?"

"If his purpose to do this remains, and he has forgotten Fanny's age, your omission to send for the money will be more likely to call his thought to the subject, than your regular demand for the price of her maintenance."

"True."

"And if he still means to have her, the execution of his purpose cannot in any event be long delayed."

"No."

"Can *we* unaided give her the education she is entitled to receive?"

Claire shook his head.

"Then had we not better continue to apply for the sum necessary to her support and education. If Mr. Jasper is indifferent about her, the money will be paid as usual; if he means to take her into his own family, our failure to apply will defer but for a very short season the evil day."

Edith's mind had become clear by this time. Her husband not making an immediate reply, she added—

"This acting on mere policy, is never, I think, the wisest. Does it not clearly involve a distrust in Providence, and a weak reliance on mere human prudence? There is a provision for Fanny's support and education, and she is justly entitled to all those natural advantages which this provision was designed to give. Under Providence, Mr. Jasper has been chosen her guardian; and under Providence the personal care of the child has fallen to our lot. Thus far we have endeavoured to discharge our duty faithfully—thus far we have done as well by the child as if she had been our own. Now, if it is best for her to remain with us, the same Providence will so dispose of events as to provide for her remaining; but if it is best for her to go into the family of Mr. Jasper, she will go there. Let us not, therefore, in our practical distrust of Providence, seek to hide ourselves from the observation of a mere creature."

"I see much in this," said Claire, as soon as his wife had ceased speaking. "Man proposes; God disposes. With Him are all our ways. Out of the evil designs and selfish purposes of men, He is ever bringing forth good."

"Then let us not fear to trust him. As we have been doing, let us continue to do, confidently believing that He will overrule all for good. To our present sight, it seems, that, unless we receive, as heretofore, a sum of money for Fanny's support and education, we cannot do for her what is right. This, at least, is my view."

"And it is mine," replied the husband.

"Then let us act from the light we have. None can do better than this."

And so it was determined to send an order to Jasper, as usual.

CHAPTER XV.

On the next day, a fellow-clerk, who had always performed this little service for Claire, took the order to Jasper. With a nervous impatience that he found it impossible to repress, Claire awaited his return. On his appearance, he said, with ill-concealed anxiety—

"Did he pay the order?"

The young man shook his head.

"What! Didn't pay it?" Though half-expecting such a result, he was none the more prepared for it, nor the less disturbed when it was known.

"No; he said that the contract entered into with you for boarding the child was at an end three months ago."

"What else did he say?"

"Nothing else."

"Did he send no message to me of any kind?"

"None. When I handed him the order, he pushed it back, and used the words I have repeated. I waited a little while for some further remark, but he made none."

"Did he seem angry?"

"Not angry; but rather pleased, I should say. There was a heartless smile on his face, as if he enjoyed the act of refusal."

Claire made no further remark. For a time he groped about, mentally, like one in darkness and lost. It appeared as if there was no escape; as if the evil which had long dogged his steps was upon him. But in a short time, a ray of light shone in here and there, paths that might be walked in safely were dimly perceived—escape seemed possible. Still, he was deeply depressed and sorely troubled.

Edith received the intelligence in a calmer spirit than her husband had expected.

"The way will be made plain before us," said she. "It is plainer now than it was last night—much plainer."

"How can you say that, Edith?"

"Mr. Jasper has refused to pay any thing more to us for Fanny's support."

"Yes."

"But in the refusal said nothing about our giving her up to him."

"Well?"

"I gather from this, and the fact that he was aware of her being twelve years old, that he does not really want her now in his own family, but refuses to pay us for her board and education from a feeling of ill-will toward you. His manner to the young man who presented the order clearly indicates this."

"You may be right there, Edith," said Claire, a further light breaking into his mind. "We have at

least done our duty toward Fanny in making this demand on her guardian. And now, the question left for us to decide may be whether it will be just toward her, and also toward our own children, still to keep her in our own family, and let her share, with the others, the best that it is in our power to give."

"And will it be hard to make that decision?" said Edith, a slight flush coming into her earnest face.

"I think not," was the firm reply.

"Have we loved her less than our own?" asked Edith.

"I believe not."

"Love seeks the highest good for its object."

"Yes—yes."

"Can a stranger love the child as we have loved her?"

Claire shook his head.

"Can a stranger, even with more of what the world gives, yet with less of a genuine affection, secure for her, as we may, what should justly be regarded as the highest good in life."

"No stranger can ever be to her, Edith, what you have been, and will continue to be."

"We must not thrust her out, Edward. We cannot thrust her out. While God permits her to remain, let us keep her, assured that He will send for her use all things needful."

"Most cheerfully will I prolong my daily toil for her sake," replied Claire; "and cheerfully will I make sacrifice of personal comfort. Yes, let her remain where she is, so long as, in God's providence,

she is permitted to remain. If Jasper continues to withhold the price of her maintenance, there will be the more left for her when she becomes of age; and then, if there are defects in her education, a few years of earnest application on her part, will remove them. Even now, we could compel him to pay for her a reasonable sum, but in securing this, we would assuredly lose the child, for this man's anger would burn hot against us."

"I have thought of that," replied Edith. "No, our only plain course, for the present, is to look away from Jasper, and regard Fanny as one of our own children."

To this conclusion the mind of Claire and his wife came firmly. Then the painful agitation they had for some time suffered gradually subsided, and they began earnestly to cast about for the ways and means whereby so large an extra draft as was likely to be made upon their slender income could be met.

Two propositions were made by Edith: one was, that they should make a reduction in their expenses, by moving into a smaller house. They now paid two hundred dollars annually for rent; and she was sure that, for one hundred and fifty, they might suit themselves very well. The other proposition was, to give two or three hours every evening, after the children were in bed, to fine needle-work, in which she was well skilled.

"I could easily earn two dollars a week, in this way," was her confident remark.

Claire, who had other plans in his mind, did not speak very encouragingly of these propositions,

though he avoided disapproval. Increased expense demanded an increase of income; and his thoughts were all now bent suggestively in that direction. As for Edith, her burdens were heavy enough; and her husband, though he did not check her generous enthusiasm, by no means acquiesced in the plan of evening toil for his wife out of the range of her many domestic duties.

A few days went by, with no incident of importance. Claire, during the time, appeared, to his wife more thoughtful that usual. One evening he came home with a brighter countenance.

"Good news, Edie," said he in a cheerful voice, as soon as the children's glad and noisy welcome of their father was over; and he drew his wife aside as he spoke.

"Good news, dear," he repeated. "I was sure the way would open for us, and it has opened."

"How, Edward?" asked Edith, with a quickly flushing face. "How has it opened?"

"I've secured employment for my evenings, at six dollars a week. So all will go on with us the same as usual. The only drawback lies in the fact that you will have to remain at home alone. But, for the sake of the end, you will bear that cheerfully."

The light which had come into Edith's countenance faded.

"What kind of employment?" she inquired, with a slight huskiness of voice.

"I've engaged to act as clerk in an auction store, where they have regular night-sales."

Edith shook her head.

"I thought you would be so delighted," said her husband, evidently much disappointed.

"You often come home, now, overwearied with the day's labour," replied Edith.

"An hour at tea-time will refresh me for the evening's work. Don't think of that a moment, Edith."

"How can I help thinking of it? No, no, Edward, you must not do this. It will destroy your health. You are not very strong."

"My health is perfectly good, Edith."

But Edith shook her head—

"Not so very good. You look paler, and are much thinner than you were a year ago. A little over-exertion throws your system off of its balance; and then you are sick."

"I will be very careful of myself," replied Claire. "If, after a few weeks, the extra labour is found to be too severe, I can give up the place. Nothing like trying, you know, dear."

Still, Edith was not satisfied. Very strongly she urged her husband not to increase his labour in the degree contemplated.

"Let us try if we can reduce our expenses by a closer economy. It is better to deny ourselves things not necessary to health, than to injure health by extra labour."

She urged this view, however, in vain. Claire could not, without at least a trial of his strength, decline the important offer which had been made to him. And so, after a consultation with Mr. Melleville, he entered upon his new employment, leaving his wife to spend the hours of his absence alone.

Not idly were those hours spent. What she had at first proposed to do, she now began to execute. Without saying any thing to her husband, she had procured, from a friend who kept a fancy-store, and who took in from the ladies a great deal of work, some fine sewing; and with this she was busily occupied until his return, which did not take place on the first night until near eleven o'clock.

There was a slight drawback in the pleasure both felt in meeting at this late hour—the drawback of weariness. Yet their hearts were tranquil and elevated in the consciousness that they were denying self for the good of another—and that one most tenderly beloved. Again the way had become plain before them; and if strength only were given to bear their increased burdens, they would move on with even lighter footsteps than before.

And now, after having lingered thus long with the humble clerk, let us turn to the rich merchant; for Jasper has become a man of extensive possessions. Wealth flowed in upon him with extraordinary rapidity—not in the regular course of trade, overreaching and unscrupulous as he was in dealing, but through what are called fortunate speculations. How he made his first hundred thousand dollars—the basis of his present very large fortune—was not clearly understood, though sundry vague rumours on the subject were afloat, none of them, however, very near the truth, except in the admission that a fraud on somebody had been committed. But let us introduce Mr. Jasper.

On the night that Claire entered upon his duties as clerk in the auction store, and about the same

hour that his duties began, Mr. Jasper, who was walking restlessly the floor of his richly furnished parlours, his mind busy with some large money-making scheme, yet fretted by a recent disappointment, found himself suddenly in the presence of, to him, a well-known individual, whose ring at the door he had not observed.

"Martin!" he exclaimed, in no affected surprise. "Is it possible?"

"Ah, Jasper! How are you? Right glad to get sight of your face again!" said the other familiarly, as he grasped the merchant's passive hand, and squeezed it until the joints cracked.

"When did you arrive in the city?" returned Jasper, as he reached his visitor a chair. He did not speak with much warmth; and yet there was an effort to be at ease and cordial.

"Some two hours ago," said Martin, in whose face was already beginning to gather a few lines in token of the sober thoughts that lay beneath his assumed smiling exterior.

"From which direction did you come?"

"West. I'm from the Upper Mississippi."

"Ah!"

"I went to Galena some five or six months ago; and have since been actively engaged in lead-mining. A great business that, Mr. Jasper."

"Ah?" This "ah?" was particularly chilling.

"There are more rapid fortunes made at the lead-mines in the neighbourhood of Galena, at present, than in any part of the United States," said Martin, approaching, by rapid advances, the subject nearest to his thoughts.

"You think so?" returned Jasper, with cold incredulity.

"I know so," was the positive response. "I could point you to a dozen men who have made their tens of thousands annually for the last five or ten years."

"It is easy to talk about making tens of thousands, Martin; but the fact itself is a more difficult matter."

"A fact is a fact, however, Mr. Jasper," said the other. "What is done, is done."

"Of course."

"It is a fact that money is made at the lead-mines, hand over fist," continued Martin. "Of this I am prepared to give you the strongest kind of evidence."

"Why should you be so anxious to convince me of this fact?" returned the merchant. "I have quite as many irons in the fire now as I can see to."

"Ah! That may be," said Martin, forcing to his rather hard features a bland smile. "But these new irons I will keep from burning."

"It's no use, Martin, to talk of lead-mines to me," said Jasper firmly. "I am spread out enough already. Contraction, not expansion, is my present motto. I've met with more than one heavy loss since I saw you."

"Have you, indeed? I'm sorry for that. But a false card will turn up now and then, you know. The game in the long run is sure."

"We're sure of nothing," replied Jasper, with considerable feeling.

"I wouldn't like to say that. Of course, all plans will not succeed; for man's judgment is far from possessing the virtue of infallibility. But human reason would be a poor endowment, did it not lead us, in most cases, to right conclusions, if we are careful in our modes of using this high faculty."

"The purpose of your visit to the East," said Jasper, who understood perfectly the man with whom he was dealing, and, therefore, determined to know at once the length and breadth of what he was expected to do, "is, I presume, to enlist some capitalists here in a lead-mining speculation?"

"My ideas do not extend quite that far," was Martin's answer. "Too many cooks, you are aware, sometimes spoil the broth. To come to the point at once, let me explain the purpose of my present journey to the East."

"Well; I am all attention."

"My fur-trade business, as I wrote you a year ago, turned out disastrously."

"Yes."

"After that, I opened a small store in one of the frontier towns, and I did very well, all things considered. But the gain was too slow to suit my ideas of things; so, meeting with a fair chance, I sold out, and bought a lead-mine, which I have been working ever since to good profit. Recently, I struck upon one of the richest veins ever discovered. If properly worked, it will yield a rapid fortune. But I have not sufficient capital to avail myself of the advantages offered, and have come on here to lay the matter before you, and to offer you a share in the business."

Jasper shook his head, saying—

"I have more business on my hands now, Martin, than I can possibly attend to."

"You don't know what you are declining, Mr. Jasper," urged Martin warmly. "You havn't yet looked at the statements which I am prepared to lay before you."

"I do know one thing," was the feeling answer, "and that is, that I am declining trouble and cost. About that part of the business, there can be little question."

"Then," said Martin, his manner changing, "I am to understand that you do not wish to join me in this matter?"

"Yes. I would like you to understand that distinctly."

"Very well. I am sorry you refuse so advantageous an investment of money; for right sure am I that no other investment you can make will turn out as this would have done. But, as you have declined, I will not offer a share in my good fortune to any one else; but prosecute the work to my own advantage."

"I thought you hadn't the capital to do that," said Jasper, speaking with ill-repressed eagerness.

"Nor have I," coolly answered Martin. "The proposition I was about to make was this—an advance of twenty thousand dollars capital on your part, to constitute you an equal partner in the mine. But this you decline."

"Certainly! certainly! I would not have entertained it for a moment."

"Exactly. So I have already inferred. I will,

therefore, as just said, retain this advantage in my own hands. But, Mr. Jasper, I shall need some help."

The visitor fixed his eyes keenly on the merchant as he said this. There was a momentary pause. Then he resumed.

"I shall only want about ten thousand dollars, though; and this you must obtain for me."

"Martin! Do you think I am made of money?" exclaimed Jasper, starting to his feet, and facing his companion, in the attitude and with the expression of a man who, finding himself in the presence of an enemy, assumes the defensive.

"Oh no," was the quiet answer—"not *made* of money. But, for a particular friend, you can no doubt, easily raise such a trifle as ten thousand dollars?"

"Trifle! You mock me, sir!"

"Don't get excited about this matter, Mr. Jasper," coolly returned Martin, whose name the reader has probably recognised as that of an agent employed by the merchant and Grind, the lawyer, some years before, in making investigations relative to the existence of coal on certain lands not far from Reading, Pennsylvania. "Don't get excited," he repeated. "That will do no good. I have not come to rob you. I don't ask you to give me ten thousand dollars. All I want is a loan, for which I will pledge good security."

"What kind of security?" asked Jasper quickly.

"Security on my lead-mine."

"Pooh! I wouldn't give the snap of a finger for such security!"

Jasper, thrown off his guard, spoke more contemptuously than was prudent.

An instant change was visible in Martin, who, rising, commenced buttoning up his coat. There was about him every mark of a man deeply offended.

"Good evening, sir!" said he, with a low, formal bow, yet with his eyes fixed searchingly in those of the merchant.

"Martin,"—Jasper did not smile, nor was there in his voice the slightest affectation of good feeling—yet his manner and tone were both decisive,—"Martin, sit down again. Talk in reason, and I will hear."

The man resumed his seat, and, with his eyes still in those of Jasper, said—

"I have talked in reason. You are worth, so report says, not less than three hundred thousand dollars. How the first hundred thousand came, is known, certainly, only to one man beside you and me. In procuring that large sum I was a very prominent agent."

"You have already been paid for your services a dozen times over."

"There may be a difference of opinion about this," replied the man boldly—"and there *is* a difference of opinion."

"I have already advanced you over five thousand dollars."

"What of that! Five thousand to three hundred thousand that you have made by the operation."

"You are in error, Martin," said Jasper, with a blended look of perplexity and distress. "I am not worth the sum you have mentioned—nothing like it. My losses during the past six months have been very heavy."

"It is your interest to say this. I can credit as much of it as I please."

"You are insulting! You presume on the power a knowledge of my affairs has given you. I will look for a more honourable agent the next time."

"Honourable! Ha! ha!" The visitor laughed in a low, guttural voice.

"Martin! I will not hear this from any living man."

The face of Jasper was almost purple with suppressed anger.

"Go!" he added. "Leave my house instantly. I defy you!"

Scarcely had these words passed his lips, ere Martin glided from the drawing-room, and in a few moments the street-door shut with a heavy, reverberating jar.

The merchant stood, like one bewildered, for a few moments, and then, as he sank into a chair, uttered a low groan. For a long time he remained as motionless as if sleeping.

CHAPTER XVI.

On leaving the house of Jasper, Martin—who, instead of having been in the city only a few hours, arrived two days previously—took his way to the office of Grind, the lawyer. He had seen this individual already several times, and now called on him again by appointment. The two men, on meeting, exchanged looks of intelligence.

"Did you see him?" asked the lawyer, as Martin took a proffered chair.

"I saw him," was replied.

"Can you make any thing out of him?'

"I think so. He fights a little hard; but the odds are against him."

"How much did you ask him to loan you?"

"Ten thousand?"

"Martin! That's cutting a little too sharp."

"Not a bit. He'll never miss such a trifle."

"You can't bleed him that deep," said the lawyer.

"Can't I? You'll see; I could get twenty thousand. But I'm disposed to be generous. Ten thousand I must and will have."

And the man laughed in a low, self-satisfied, sinister chuckle.

"He's able enough," remarked Grind.

"So you have told me. And if he is able, he must pay. I helped him to a fortune, and it is but fair that he should help me a little, now that a fortune is in my grasp. I only want the money as a loan."

"Wouldn't five thousand answer your purpose?" asked the lawyer. "That is a large sum. It is not a very easy matter for even a rich man, who is engaged heavily in business, to lay down ten thousand dollars at call."

"Five thousand will not do, Mr. Grind."

"Jasper has lost, to my certain knowledge, twenty thousand dollars in three months."

"So much?"

"At least that sum. Money came in so fast, that he grew a little wild in his speculations, and played

his cards with the dashing boldness of a gambler while in a run of luck. I cautioned him, but to no good purpose. One of his latest movements had been to put fifty or sixty thousand dollars in a cotton factory?"

"Poh! What folly."

"A most egregious blunder. But he fancies himself an exceedingly shrewd man."

"He has been remarkably fortunate in his operations."

"So he has. But he is more indebted, I think, to good luck than to a sound judgment. He has gone up to dizzy height so rapidly, that his weak head is already beginning to swim."

"What has become of that pretty little ward of his?" asked Martin, somewhat abruptly.

"Why didn't you put that question to him?" replied Grind. "You would have been more likely to get a satisfactory answer."

"I may do so after I have the ten thousand dollars in my pocket. That was rather a shameful business, though; wasn't it? I never had a very tender conscience, but I must own to having suffered a few twinges for my part in the transaction. He received over a hundred thousand dollars for the land?"

"Yes; and that clear of some heavy fees that you and I claimed for services rendered."

"Humph! I'm not quite paid yet. But, touching the child, Mr. Grind: don't you know any thing about her?"

"Nothing, personally."

"What was it Jasper paid for the tract of land?"

"One thousand dollars.'

"Paid it into his own hands as the child's guardian."

"Yes; that was the simple transaction."

"Has the public never made a guess at the real truth of this matter?"

"Never, so far as my knowledge goes. There have been some vague whisperings—but no one has seemed to comprehend the matter."

"The purchase was made in your name, was it not?"

"Yes."

"That is, you bought from Jasper as the child's guardian; and afterward sold it back to him."

"Yes."

"Why didn't you hold on to it when it was fairly in your hands? I only wish I had been in your place?"

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders, but did not commit himself by acknowledging that he had, more than once, regretted his omission to claim the property while legally in his hands, and defy Jasper to wrest it from him.

Leaving these two men, whose relation to Jasper is sufficiently apparent to the reader's mind, we will return to the merchant, whom we left half-stupefied at the bold demand of an associate in wrong-doing. A long time passed ere his activity of mind returned. While he sat, brooding—dreamily—over what had just passed, a little daughter came into the parlour, and seeing him, came prattling merrily to his side. But in attempting to clamber upon his knee, she was pushed away rudely, and with angry words. For a few moments she stood looking at him, her little

breast rising and falling rapidly; then she turned off, and went slowly, and with a grieving heart, from the room.

Jasper sighed heavily as the child passed out of sight; and rising up, began moving about with a slow pace, his eyes cast upon the floor. The more he dwelt upon the visit of Martin—whom, in his heart, he had wished dead—the more uneasy he felt, and the more he regretted having let him depart in anger. He would give twice ten thousand dollars rather than meet the exposure which this man could make.

Riches was the god of Leonard Jasper. Alas! how little power was there in riches to make his heart happy. Wealth beyond what he had hoped to obtain in a whole lifetime of devotion to mammon, had flowed in upon him in two or three short years. But, was he a happier man? Did he enjoy life with a keener zest? Was his sleep sweeter? Ah, no! In all that went to make up the true pleasure of life, the humble clerk, driven to prolonged hours of labour, beyond what his strength could well bear, through his ill-nature and injustice, was far the richer man. And his wealth consisted not alone in the possession of a clear conscience and a sustaining trust in Providence. There was the love of many hearts to bless him. In real household treasures few were as rich as he.

But, in home treasures, how poor was Leonard Jasper! Poor to the extreme of indigence! The love of his children, reaching toward him spontaneously its tendrils, he rejected in the selfish devotion of every thought and feeling to business as a means of ac-

quiring wealth. And as to the true riches, which many around him were laying up where no moth could corrupt nor thieves break through and steal, he rejected them as of no account.

With such a man as Leonard Jasper, holding the position of head of a family, how little of the true home spirit, so full of tenderness and mutual love, is to be expected! Had Mrs. Jasper been less a woman of the world; had she been capable of loving any thing out of herself, and, therefore, of loving her husband and children, with that true love which seeks their higher good, a different state of things would have existed in this family, spite of Jasper's unfeeling sordidness. But, as it was, no fire of love melted the natural perverseness inherited by the children, and they grew up, cherishing mutual antagonism, and gradually coming to regard their parents only as persons with power to thwart their inclinations, or as possessing the means of gratifying their desires.

With all his wealth, how few were the real sources of happiness possessed by Jasper! Pressed down with anxiety about the future, and forced to toil beyond his strength, how many of life's truest blessings were poured into the lap of Edward Claire!

The sleep of the poor clerk, that night, was sound and refreshing. The merchant tossed to and fro on his pillow until long after the midnight watches advanced upon the morning; and then, when wearied nature claimed her due, he slept only for brief periods, continually startled by frightful dreams.

At an early hour next day, he called upon Grind, who was still his legal adviser.

"Have you seen Martin?" he asked the moment he entered the office.

"Martin! Surely he is not in the city!" returned Grind evasively.

"He surely is," said Jasper, fretfully.

"Martin. Where in the world did he come from? I thought him somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Rocky Mountains. What does he want?"

"No good, of course."

"That may be said safely. Have you seen him?"

"Yes."

"When? This morning?"

"No; he called at my house last night."

"Called last night! What did he want?"

"Ten thousand dollars," replied Jasper.

"Ten thousand dollars!!" The lawyer's well-feigned surprise completed the deception practised upon Jasper. He did not, for an instant, suspect collusion between him and Martin.

"Yes; he very coolly proposed that I should lend him that sum, to enable him to carry on some lead-mining operations in the west."

"Preposterous!"

"So I told him."

"Well, what did he say?"

"Oh, he blustered, and made covert threats of exposure, of course."

"The scoundrel!" said Grind, fiercely.

"He's a villain double-dyed. I have never ceased to regret that we brought him into this business. We should have had a man of better spirit—of a nicer sense of honour."

"Yes, Mr. Jasper, that is true enough," replied

Grind; "but the mischef is, your men of nicer honour are too squeamish for the kind of work in which we employed him. This is the defect in all such operations. Men cannot be thoroughly trusted."

The merchant sighed. He felt too deeply the force of Grind's remark.

"You know," said he, "this Martin better than I do. What is his character? Is he a mere blusterer, whose bark is worse than his bite; or is he vindictive and unscrupulous?"

"Both vindictive and unscrupulous. I must warn you not to provoke his ill-will. He would take delight in exposing all he knows about this business, if he is once fairly turned against you. A fast friend—he is a bitter enemy."

"But see what a price he demands for his friendship! I have already given him some five thousand dollars for his services, and now he demands ten more. In a year he will be back, and coolly seek to levy a contribution of twenty thousand dollars."

"I understood you to say that he only asked for a loan," remarks the lawyer.

"A loan! That's mere mockery. If you placed ten thousand dollars in his hands, would you ever expect to see the first copper of it again?"

Grind shrugged his shoulders.

"Of course you would not. It's a levy, not a loan—and so he, in his heart, regards it."

"He's a dangerous man," said the lawyer, "and it's to be regretted that you ever had any thing to do with him. But, now that your hand is in the lion's mouth, the wisest thing is to get it out with as little detriment as possible."

"Ten thousand dollars!" ejaculated the merchant. "Why, it's downright robbery! He might just as well stop me on the highway."

"It's a hard case, I must own, Mr. Jasper. You might resist him, and, at least not let him obtain what he demands without a struggle; but the question is, may you not receive a mortal wound in the contest."

"Ah! that is the rub, Grind. Rather than meet the exposure he could make, I would give twenty thousand dollars; yea, half, if not all I am worth."

Can wealth, held on such a tenure, and in such a state of mind, be called riches? Ah, no. How the possession is changed from a blessing into a curse!

"Then, Mr. Jasper," replied the lawyer, "there is but one course plain before you. If you make this man your enemy, he will surely pursue you to the death. There is no pity in him."

Jasper groaned aloud. Ere he could reply, the door of the office opened, and the individual about whom they were conversing entered. With the skill of practised actors, each instantly assumed a part, and hid, under a false exterior, their true states of mind. With something of cordiality each greeted the other; while side-glances, unobserved by Jasper, passed rapidly between Martin and the lawyer. A few commonplace inquiries and remarks followed, when Jasper made a movement to go, saying, as he did so—

"Mr. Martin, I will be pleased to see you some time to-day."

"Thank you; I will do myself the pleasure to call," was coolly answered. "At what time will you be most at leisure?"

"During the afternoon. Say at four or five o'clock."

"I will be there at four," returned Martin, in a bland voice, and with a courteous inclination of the head.

"Very well—you will find me in."

The merchant bowed to the accomplices—they were nothing better—and retired.

"Humph! I didn't expect to find him here quite so early," said Martin, with a sinister smile. "I rather guess I frightened him last night."

"I rather guess you did," returned the lawyer, his countenance reflecting the light that played on the other's face.

"Will the money come?" asked Martin.

"Undoubtedly."

"That's good. Ten thousand?"

"Yes."

"What did he say? He came to consult you, of course?"

"Yes."

"Well, what did he say?"

"More than I need take time to repeat. He is thoroughly frightened. That is enough for you to know."

"Ten thousand," said Martin musingly, and speaking to himself. "Ten thousand! That will do pretty well. But, if he will bleed for fifteen thousand, why may I not set the spring of my

lancet a little deeper. I can make good use of my money."

"No—no," returned the lawyer quickly. "Ten thousand is enough. Don't play the dog and the shadow. This is over-greediness."

"Well—well. Just as you say. I can make him another friendly call in a year or so from this time."

The lawyer smiled in a way peculiar to himself, and then said—

"Hadn't you better be content with five thousand now. This goose will, no doubt, lay golden eggs for some years to come."

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," was the quick answer. "I have gone in now for the ten thousand; and ten thousand I must have. I may be content with a smaller sum at my next appearance."

"You are to see him at four o'clock?" said Grind.

"Yes; that was the hour I named. So you must get all the necessary papers ready for me in time. I don't want to let him get the hitch on me of seeking to extort money. I only ask a loan, and will give bona-fide security on my lead-mine." Then, with one of his low chuckles, he added—"If he can get ten thousand dollars out of it, he will do more than any one else can. Ha! ha! ha!"

"The evidence of property, which you have," said Grind, "is all as it shows on the face?"

"It is, upon honour."

"Very well. Then I will draw the necessary

papers, so that as little delay as possible need occur in the transference of security for the loan."

What further passed between the parties is of no consequence to the reader.

At four o'clock, precisely, Martin was at the store of Jasper.

"I hope to find you a little more reasonable to-day," said the merchant, with a forced smile, as the two men, after retiring to a remote part of the store, sat down and faced each other.

"I should be sorry to do any thing out of reason," returned Martin. His manner was more serious than Jasper's.

"I think your present demand out of reason," was answered.

"No good can possibly come, Mr. Jasper," said Martin, with a slight air of impatience, "out of an argument between you and I, on this subject. The sum I named to you last night I must have. Nothing less will meet my present want. But, understand me distinctly, I only ask it as a loan, and come prepared to give you the fullest security."

As Mr. Martin said this, he drew a package of papers from his pocket. "Here are the necessary documents," he added.

"Ten thousand dollars! Why, my dear sir, a sum like this is not to be picked up in the streets."

"I am very well aware of that," was the cool answer. "Had such been the case, I never would have troubled you with procuring the sum; nor would I have gone to the expense and fatigue of a long journey."

"You certainly ought to know enough of busi-

ness, Martin, to be aware that ten thousand dollars is not always to be commanded, even by the wealthiest, at a moment's notice."

"I do not ask the whole sum in cash," replied Martin. "Three or four thousand in ready money will do. Your notes at four and six months will answer very well for the balance."

But we will not record further what passed between these two men. It was all in vain that Jasper strove to escape; his adversary was too powerful. Ere they separated, Martin had in his possession, in cash and promissory notes, the sum of ten thousand dollars!

Already were the ill-gotten riches of Leonard Jasper taking to themselves wings. Unhappy man! How wretched was he during that and many succeeding days! Rolling, so to speak, in wealth, he yet possessed not life's highest blessing, a truly contented mind, flowing from conscious rectitude and an abiding trust in Providence. Without these, how poor is even he who counts his millions! With them, how rich is the humble toiler, who, receiving day by day his daily bread, looks up and is thankful!

CHAPTER XVII.

A FEW weeks subsequent to the occurrences mentioned in the last chapter, Leonard Jasper received a call from Mr. Melleville, in whose service Claire still remained. The greeting of the two men was distant, yet courteous. A few words on current topics passed between them, after which Mr. Melleville said—

"I have called to ask you a question or two in regard to a child of the late Mr. Elder, to whom you are guardian."

The blood came instantly to the face of Jasper, who was not prepared for this; and in spite of his struggle to seem self-possessed, his eyes sank under those of his visitor. In a few moments, he recovered himself, and replied—

"The child, you mean, who is boarding with Edward Claire?"

"The same." The eyes of Melleville were fixed on those of Jasper so steadily, that the latter wavered, and, finally, again dropped to the floor.

"Well, I am ready to hear any thing that you have to say." Jasper had thrown off, once more, the vague sense of coming evil that made him cower under the steady gaze of Melleville.

"I learn," said the latter, "from Mr. Claire, that you refuse to pay any further sums for her maintenance. Is the property left by her father, to

which common report has affixed considerable value, exhausted, or"——

"I have refused to pay *him* any further sums," said Jasper, in a quick, excited voice, interrupting Mr. Melleville. "Our contract, regularly entered into, has expired by limitation. He was to have the care of her only until she reached her twelfth year. Of this fact he is clearly advised, and I wonder at his pertinacity in endeavouring to retain the child, when he knows that I, her guardian, wish to have her in my own possession."

"He has had her ever since she was a little child; and both he and his wife are now strongly attached to her. In fact, she regards them as her parents; and their affection for her is not exceeded by their affection for their own children. To separate them would be exceedingly painful to all parties. As for the child, it would make her very unhappy."

"I can't help that, Mr. Melleville." Jasper spoke coldly.

"Under all the circumstances," said Mr. Melleville, after a pause, speaking slowly, and with considerable emphasis in his words, "it is my opinion that you had better let the child remain where she is."

"Why do you say so?" Jasper spoke with ill-concealed surprise; and the uneasy, suspicious manner, at first exhibited, returned.

"Claire regards the child as his own; and must so continue to regard her, even though taken out of his hands."

"Well, what of that?"

"It is for you, Mr. Jasper," was returned, "to determine for yourself, whether the surveillance of a man like Claire, who cannot now cease to feel a parent's interest in your ward, will be altogether agreeable."

"Surveillance! What do you mean? I don't understand this language. It looks like an effort to force me into measures. Pray, what have I to fear from Edward Claire?"

"Sometimes," replied Melleville, with a slow, meaning enunciation, "those we regard as most insignificant are the very ones we should most fear."

"Fear! Fear, Mr. Melleville! You make use of strange language."

"Perhaps I do," was answered. "And, as it seems unpleasant to you, I will say no more. I did not mean, when I called, to speak just as I have done. But, as the words have been uttered, I beg you to weigh them well, and to believe that they have a meaning. Good morning."

Jasper suppressed the utterance of the word "stay," which arose to his lips, and returned the bow of Mr. Melleville, who left without further remark.

"What can this mean?" Thus mused Leonard Jasper, when alone. "Can this scoundrel, Martin, have dropped a hint of the truth?" A slight shiver went through his nerves. "Something is wrong. There is suspicion in the thought of Melleville. I didn't look for trouble in this quarter."

To his own unpleasant reflections we will leave

the merchant, and return to Edward Claire and his true-minded, loving-hearted wife.

For a week or two after the former entered upon his new duties as assistant clerk in a night-auction, he experienced no serious inconvenience from his more prolonged labours, although it did not escape the watchful eyes of his wife that his complexion was losing its freshness, and that his appetite was far from being so good as before. After this, he began to suffer oppressive weariness, that made the evening's toil a daily increasing burden. Then succeeded a feverish state, accompanied by pains in the head, back, and through the breast. Edith remonstrated, even with tears; but still Claire went nightly to his task, though each successive evening found him with less and less ability for its performance.

At last, he came home from the store of Mr. Melleville, at the usual tea-time, feeling so unwell that he was forced to lie down. He had no appetite for supper, and merely sipped part of a cup of tea brought to him by his wife as he still reclined upon the bed.

"Don't get up," said Edith, seeing her husband, after he had lain for some time, about to rise.

"I can't lie here any longer; it's nearly seven o'clock now."

"You're not going out to-night!"

"O yes; I must be at the store. There is no one to take my place, and the sales will begin by the time I can get there."

"But you are too sick to go out, Edward."

"I feel much better than I did, Edith. This little rest has refreshed me a great deal."

"No—no, Edward! You must not go away," said his wife in a distressed voice. "You are sick now, and the extra exertion of an evening may throw you into a serious illness."

"I feel a great deal better, dear," urged Claire. "But, sick or well, I must be there to-night, for the sale cannot go on without me. If I do not feel better to-morrow, I will ask Mr. F—— to get some one, temporarily, in my place."

Still Edith opposed, but in vain.

By the time Claire arrived at the auction store, his head was throbbing with a pain so intense that he could scarcely see. Still, he resolutely persevered in his determination to go through, if possible, with the duties of the evening; and so, taking his place at his desk, as the auctioneer went upon the stand to cry the goods which had been advertised for sale, he prepared to keep the usual record of purchasers and prices. This he was able to do for half an hour, when overtaxed and exhausted nature could bear up no longer.

"Mr. Claire," said the auctioneer, as he took in hand a new article, "did you make that last entry? —Mr. Jackson, ten cents a yard."

Claire's head had fallen over on the book in which he had been writing, and the auctioneer, supposing him only yielding to a momentary feeling of fatigue, or indolence, thus called his attention to his duties.

But Claire made no answer.

"Say! young man! Are you asleep!" The

auctioneer spoke now with some sharpness of tone; but, as before, his words were not heeded.

"What's the matter, Mr. Claire? Are you sick?"

Still no response or movement.

"Mr. Claire! Bless me!" The auctioneer was now by his side, with his hand on him. "Bring some water, quick! He's fainted—or is dead! Here! some one help me to lay him down."

Two or three men came quickly behind the auctioneer's stand and assisted to lift the insensible man from the high stool on which he was seated, and place his body in a reclining position. Then water was dashed into his face, and various other means of restoration used. Full ten minutes passed before signs of returning life were exhibited. His recovery was very slow, and it was nearly an hour before he was well enough to be removed to his dwelling.

The shock of his appearance, supported from the carriage in which he had been conveyed home, by two men, was terrible to his wife, whose anxiety and fear had wrought her feelings already up to a high pitch of excitement.

"Oh! what is the matter? What has happened?" she cried, wringing her hands, while her face blanched to a deathly paleness.

"Don't be frightened," returned Claire, smiling feebly. "It was only a slight fainting fit. I m over it now."

"That's all, madam," said the men who had brought him home. "He merely fainted. Don't be alarmed. It's all over."

After receiving the thanks of Claire and his assurances that he needed nothing further from their kindness, the men retired, and Edward then made every effort in his power to calm down the feelings of his wife, who continued weeping. This was no easy task, particularly as he was unable long to hide the many evidences of serious illness from which he was suffering. Against his remonstrance, so soon as she saw how it was with him, Mrs. Claire sent off the domestic for their family physician; who on learning the causes which led to the condition in which he found his patient, hesitated not to say that he must, as he valued his life, give up the night tasks he had imposed upon himself.

"Other men," said Claire, in answer to this, "devote quite as many hours to business."

"All men are not alike in constitution," returned the physician. "And even the strongest do not make overdrafts upon the system, without finding, sooner or later, a deficit in their health-account. As for you, nature has not given you the physical ability for great endurance. You cannot overtask yourself without a derangement of machinery."

How reluctantly, and with what a feeling of weakness, Claire acquiesced in this decision, the reader may imagine.

The morning found him something better, but not well enough to sit up. Mrs. Claire had, by this time, recovered in a measure her calmness and confidence. She had thought much, during the sleepless hours of the preceding night, and though the future was far from opening clearly to her straining vision, her mind rested in a well-assured confidence

that all things would work together for their good. She knew in whom she trusted. On the Rock of Ages she had built the habitation where dwelt her higher hopes; and the storms of this world had no power to prevail against it.

How little dreamed gentle Fanny Elder—or Fanny Claire, as she was called—when she laid her cheek lovingly to that of her sick "father"—she knew him by no other name—and drew her arms around his neck, that he was suffering alone on her account. In her unselfish love, Claire felt a sweet compensation—while all he endured on her account had the effect to draw her, as it were, into his very heart.

As quickly as it could be done, Mrs. Claire got through with the most pressing of her morning duties, and then, the older children away to school, she came and sat down by her husband's bedside, and took his hand in hers. As he looked into her face, pale from sleeplessness and anxiety, tears filled his eyes.

"O, Edie!" said he, his voice tremulous with feeling, "isn't this disheartening? What *are* we to do?"

"*He* careth for us," was the low, calmly spoken reply; and, as Edith lifted a finger upward, a ray of heavenly confidence beamed in her countenance.

"I know, Edie; I know, but"——

The sick man left his sentence unfinished. A heavy sigh marking his state of doubt, and darkness.

"We must feel as well as know, Edward," said his wife. "God is good. In looking back through

all our past life, does not the retrospection lead to this undoubting conclusion? I am sure you will say yes. Has he not, in every case, proved better to us than all our fears?—Why, then, should we distrust him now? In the beautiful language of Cowper, let us say in these dark seasons—

'Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.
His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.'

"Shall we doubt the sun's existence, because the night has fallen? No, dear husband, no! There are bright stars smiling above us in token of his unerring return. We know that the morning cometh after a season of darkness; and so, after our spirits have lingered awhile in the realm of shadows, the light will break in from above. Has it not always been so, Edward?"

"He has led us by a way which we knew not."

The sick man's eyes were closed as he murmured these words; and his voice was slightly tremulous, yet expressive of a returning state of confidence.

"Yet, how safely," replied Edith. "When our feet were in slippery places, and we leaned on Him, did he not support us firmly? and when the mire and clay were deep in our path, did He not keep us from sinking therein?"

"He is goodness itself," said Claire, a calmer expression coming into his face. "It is wrong so to let doubt, distrust, and fear creep in and get posses-

sion of the heart; but, we are human—weakness and error are born with us. When the way in which we are walking is suddenly closed up before us, and we see the opening to no other way, how can we keep the faint heart from sinking?"

"Only as Peter was saved from sinking. If we look to God, He will lift our hearts above the yielding billows. If we stand still, hopefully and trustingly, the high mountain before us will become as a plain, so that we can walk on in a smooth way, joyful and rejoicing."

"And so this high mountain, which has risen up so suddenly, will soon be cleft for us or levelled to a plain, if we wait patiently and confidingly for its removal?"

"Oh! I am sure of it, Edward," replied Mrs. Claire, with a beautiful enthusiasm. "We are His creatures, and He loves us with an infinite love. When his children are disposed to trust too much to the arm of flesh, He sometimes shows them their weakness in order that they may feel His strength. Faithfully and unselfishly, my husband, have you tried to meet the suddenly increased demand upon us: and this out of love for one of God's children. In the trial, weakness has prevailed over strength. Suddenly your hands have fallen to your side powerless. God saw it all; and permitted it all; and, in His own good time, will supply, from other sources, all that is really needed. We have the promise—our bread shall be given, and our water sure—not only the natural food that sustains outward life, but the true bread of heavenly affections, and the waters of pure truth, which nourish and sustain the spirit."

Edith ceased speaking. Her husband did not make an immediate reply; but lay pondering her words, and letting his thoughts expand their wings in the purer atmosphere into which she had lifted him.

After that they conversed together hopefully of the future; not that they saw the way more clearly before them, but heavenly confidence had taken the place of human distrust.

It was, perhaps, eleven o'clock in the day—the doctor had been there, and pronounced the condition of his patient favourable, but enjoined quiet and prolonged rest from either bodily or mental exertion—and the mind of Claire was beginning to run again in a slightly troubled channel.

"Here is a letter for you," said his wife, coming into the room, after a brief absence. "A young man just left it at the door."

Claire took the letter, wondering as he did so who it could be from. On breaking the seal, and unfolding it, he was greatly surprised to find within a check to his order for one hundred and fifty dollars, signed Leonard Jasper; and still more surprised to read the accompanying note, which was in these words:

"Enclosed you will find one hundred and fifty dollars, the sum due you for Fanny Elder's maintenance during the past and current quarter. When convenient, I should be glad to see you. Seeing that the child has remained with you so long, I don't know that it will be advisable to make a change now, although I had other views in regard to her. However, when you call, we can settle matters in regard to her definitively."

"Better to us than all our fears," murmured Claire, as he handed the letter to his wife, who read it with a truly thankful heart.

"Our way is smooth once more," she said, smiling through outpressing tears—"the mountain has become a level plain. All the dark clouds have been swept from our sky, and the sun is shining even more brightly than of old."

It was more than a week before Claire was sufficiently recovered to go out and attend to business as usual. At the first opportunity, he called upon Mr. Jasper, who received him with marked kindness of manner.

"I do not, now," said the merchant, "entertain the same views in regard to my ward that I did some time ago. Your opposition to my wishes then, fretted me a good deal; and I made up my mind, decisively, that so soon as she was twelve years of age, you must give her up. It was from this feeling that I acted when I refused to pay your last order. Since then, I have reflected a good deal on the subject; and reflection has modified, considerably, my feelings. I can understand how strong must be the attachment of both yourself and wife, and how painful the thought of separation from a long-cherished object of affection."

"The dread of separation, Mr. Jasper," replied Claire, "has haunted us during the last two years like an evil spirit."

"It need haunt you no more, Edward," was the kindly spoken reply. "If you still wish to retain the care of this child, you are free to do so."

"You have taken a mountain from my heart, Mr. Jasper," was the young man's feeling response.

"It is settled, then, Edward, that she remains with you. And now I must say a word about her education. I wish that to be thorough. She must have good advantages; better than the sum now paid for her maintenance will procure."

Claire made no reply, and Jasper continued—

"I have this to propose. The bulk of property left by her father is contained in two moderate-sized houses, one of which is at this time without a tenant. It is a very comfortable house for a small family. Just the thing, I should say, for you. If you will move into this house, you shall have it rent free, as a set-off to the increased charge Fanny will be to you in future. The three hundred per annum will be paid as usual. How will that do?"

"The compensation, I think, will be greater than the service," replied Claire.

"Not at all. During the next five or six years, or until she gains her majority, you will find the cost of clothing and education a constantly increasing sum. I know more about these things than you do. And I am very sure, since I understand your relation to her, that twice this expenditure could not gain for her what she will have while in your care. As her guardian, I feel it my duty to provide liberally for her comfort and education, and to this you, of course, can have nothing to object."

And Claire did not object. In a few weeks from that time he removed into one of the houses mentioned by Jasper—a larger and far more comfort-

able one than that in which he had lived for several years. Here, with a thankful heart, he gathered his wife and children around him. How happy they all were! Not selfishly happy—if such contradictory terms may be used—but happy in the warmth of mutual love. A heaven on earth was this little household. Shall we contrast it with that of Leonard Jasper? No!—the opposite picture would leave upon the reader's mind too sad an impression; and we will not burden this chapter with another shadow.

CHAPTER XVIII.

During the five or six following years, a number of events occurred bearing more or less seriously upon some of the actors in our story. With Edward Claire and his family, life had flowed on in an even current; and, but for the fact that his health never fairly recovered from the shock it received in consequence of his having taxed his physical system beyond its capability of endurance, the sunshine would never have been a moment from his threshold.

The important addition made to his income through the new arrangement volunteered by Fanny's guardian, gave to his external condition a more favourable aspect. He was no longer troubled about the ways and means of providing for his needful expenses. A much better situation, so far as a higher salary was concerned, had, during this

time offered; but, as it required an amount of confinement and labour which he could not give, without endangering his health, he wisely declined the offer.

Far less smoothly had the current of Leonard Jasper's life flowed on. Twice during this period had he received visits from his old acquaintance, Martin, and each time he was made poorer by five thousand dollars. It was all in vain that he struggled and resisted. The man had no compassion in him. He cared not who suffered loss, so he was the gainer.

There were other miners at work sapping the foundations of Jasper's fortune, besides this less concealed operator. Parker, the young man who succeeded to the place of Claire, and who was afterward raised to the condition of partner, with a limited interest, was far from being satisfied with his dividend in the business. The great bulk of Jasper's means were used in outside speculations; and as the result of these became successively known to Parker, his thoughts began to run in a new channel. "If I only had money to go into this," and, "If I only had money to go into that," were words frequently on his tongue. He regarded himself as exceedingly shrewd; and confidently believed that, if he had capital to work with, he could soon amass an independent fortune.

"Money makes money," was his favourite motto.

Unscrupulous as his partner, it is not surprising that Parker, ere long, felt himself perfectly authorized to use the credit of the house in private schemes of profit. To do this safely, it was neces-

sary to have a friend outside of the firm. Such a friend he did not find it very hard to obtain; and as nearly the whole burden of the business fell upon his shoulders, it was not at all difficult to hide every thing from Jasper.

Confident as Parker was in his great shrewdness, his speculations outside of the business did not turn out very favourably. His first essay was in the purchase of stocks, on which he lost, in a week, two thousand dollars.

Like the gamester who loses, he only played deeper, in the hope of recovering his losses; and as it often happens with the gamester, in similar circumstances, the deeper he played, the more he lost.

And so it went on. Sometimes the young man had a turn of good fortune, and sometimes all the chances went against him. But he was too far committed to recede without a discovery. There was no standing still; and so newer and bolder operations were tried, involving larger and larger sums of money, until the responsibilities of the firm, added to the large cash drafts made without the cognizance of Jasper, were enormous.

To all such mad schemes the end must come; and the end came in this instance. Failing to procure, by outside operations, sufficient money to meet several large notes, he was forced to divulge a part of his iniquity to Jasper, in order to save the credit of the firm. Suspicion of a deeper fraud being thereby aroused in the mind of his partner, time, and a sifting investigation of the affairs of the house, revealed the astounding fact that Parker had

abstracted in money, and given the notes of the firm for his own use, to the enormous amount of fifty thousand dollars.

A dissolution of co-partnership took place in consequence. Parker, blasted in reputation, was dragged before a court of justice, in order to make him disgorge property alleged to be in his possession. But nothing could be found; and he was finally discharged from custody. The whole loss fell upon Jasper. He had nursed a serpent in his bosom, warming it with the warmth of his own life; and the serpent had stung him. Is it any wonder?

This circumstance, the discovery of Parker's fraudulent doings, took place about two years prior to the time when Fanny Elder attained her legal age.

The first thought of Jasper, after his separation from Parker, which took place immediately on discovering that he had used the credit of the firm improperly, was to send for Claire, and offer him a salary of a thousand dollars a year, to come in and fill the responsible position as clerk, from which Parker had just been ejected as partner.

"I can trust him fully," said Jasper to himself; "and I don't know anybody else that I can trust. He is honest; I will give him credit for that; too honest, it may be, for his own good. But, I don't know. Who would not rather be in his shoes than in Parker's?"

For some time Jasper's mind was favourable to making Claire the offer proposed, and he was about writing him a note, when a new view of the case struck him, dependent on the young man's relation to his ward, Fanny Elder.

"Oh no, no, no!" said he emphatically, speaking to himself—"that, I fear me, will not do. It would give him too open an access to my books, papers, and private accounts, in which are entries and memoranda that it might be dangerous for him to see."

Jasper sighed deeply as he finished this sentence, and then fell into a musing state. His thoughts, while this lasted, were not of the most self-satisfying character. Some serious doubts as to his having, in the main, pursued the wisest course in life, were injected into his mind; and, remarkable as it may seem for one so absorbed in the love of gain, there were moments when he almost envied the poor, but honest clerk, who had an approving conscience, and feared no man's scrutiny.

It was with no slight reluctance that he finally came to the conclusion that it would be altogether unsafe to take Claire into his employment. And so he cast about for some one to supply the place left vacant by Parker's withdrawal from the business. In his final selection he was not over-fortunate, as the result proved. The new clerk was shrewd, and capable enough, and apparently as much devoted to his employer's interests as Jasper could wish. Had not his own interests been regarded as paramount to those of the merchant, Jasper would have possessed in him a valuable assistant. But the clerk did not rise superior to temptations which came in his way. Jasper continued to trade on the close-cutting, overreaching, and unscrupulous system; and under such a teacher his clerk proved an apt learner.

"He cuts right and left," said he to himself, "and

why may not I cut left and right when a good opportunity offers?"

Soon he began to "cut left and right," as he termed it, and it was not remarkable that, in his cutting operations, his employer occasionally suffered. The upshot was, after holding his situation a year, that several false entries, in his hand-writing, were discovered in the books of Mr. Jasper. To what extent he robbed his employer, the latter never accurately knew; but he was worse off by at least three or four thousand dollars through his peculations.

Again the question of taking Claire once more into his employment came up in the mind of Jasper. After viewing it on every side, the decision was adverse. He felt that too great a risk was involved. And so he employed one in whom he could confide with less certainty.

Several years had now passed since the merchant began to feel the shock of adverse winds. All before was a summer sea, and the ship of his fortune had bent her sails alone to favouring breezes. But this was to be no longer. His ship had suffered not only by stress of weather, but also by the sacrifice of a portion of cargo to save what remained. And, at last, she was driving on toward the breakers, and her safety from destruction only hoped for through the activity, skill, and tireless vigilance of her helmsman.

A few years before, Mr. Jasper considered himself worth between two and three hundred thousand dollars; now, he passed sleepless nights in fear of impending ruin. He had trusted in riches; he had

called them, in his heart, the greatest good. At his word they had poured in upon him from all sides, until he was half bewildered at sight of the glittering treasures; but, just as he began to feel secure in his possessions, they began to take themselves wings and fly away.

And, alas for him! he had laid up no other treasures. None in heaven; none in the hearts of his wife and children; none in his own mind. The staff upon which he had leaned was now a splintering reed, wounding as it bent under him.

CHAPTER XIX.

THERE was one point of time to which Leonard Jasper looked with no little anxiety, and that was to the period of Fanny Elder's majority, when it was his purpose to relinquish his guardianship, and wash his hands, if it were possible to do so, entirely clean of her. Until the estate left by her father was settled up, the property in her hands and receipts in his, there was danger ahead. And, as the time drew nearer and nearer, he felt increasing uneasiness.

On the very day that Fanny reached her eighteenth year, Jasper sent a note to Claire, asking an interview.

"I wish," said he, when the latter came, "to have some conference with you about Miss Elder. She has now, you are no doubt aware, attained the legal age. Such being the case, I wish, as early as it

can be done, to settle up the estate of her father, and pay over to her, or to any person she may select as her agent, the property in my hands. It has increased some in value. Will you consult her on the subject?"

Claire promised to do so; and, at the same time, asked as to the amount of Fanny's property.

"The total value will not fall much short of eight thousand dollars," replied Jasper. "There are two houses and lots that would sell at any time for six thousand dollars. You live in one of these houses, and the other is rented for two hundred and fifty dollars. Then there are nearly two thousand dollars in six per cent. stocks. When her father died, his estate consisted of these two houses, and a piece of poor land which he had taken as satisfaction for a debt. At the first opportunity, I sold the land and invested the money. This sum, with accumulations of interest, and rents received for several years, beyond what was required for Fanny's maintenance, has now increased to within a fraction of two thousand dollars, and is, as just said, invested in stocks. I think," added Jasper, "that you had better assume the management of this property yourself. Get from Miss Elder a power of attorney authorizing you to settle the estate, and the whole business can be completed in a very short time. I will make you out an accurate statement of every thing, so that you will be at no loss to comprehend the accounts."

To this there could, of course, be no objection on the part of Claire. He promised to confer with

Fanny, and let Jasper know, in a day or two, the result.

Now came a new trial for Claire and his wife. They had taken Fanny, when only four years of age, and taken her so entirely into their home and affections, that she had almost from the first seemed to them as one of their own children. In a brief time the earlier memories of the child faded. The past was absorbed in the present; and she loved as parents none other than those she called by the tender names of "father" and "mother." The children with whom she grew up she knew only as her brothers and sisters. This thorough adoption and incorporation of the child into their family was not, in any sense, the work of design on the part of Claire and his wife. But they saw, in the beginning, no reason to check the natural tendency thereto. When little Fanny, of her own accord, addressed them, soon after her virtual adoption, as "father" and "mother," they accepted the child's own interpretation of their relative positions, and took her from that moment more entirely into their hearts.

And so Fanny Elder grew up to womanhood, in the full belief that she was the child of Mr. and Mrs. Claire. The new trial through which this excellent couple were now to pass, the reader can easily imagine. The time had come when Fanny must know the real truth in regard to herself—must be told that she had no natural claim upon the love of those whose love she prized above all things.

It seemed cruel to take away the conscious right to love and be loved, which had so long blessed her. And yet the truth must now be made known, and

Mrs. Claire took upon herself the task of breaking it as gently as possible.

A woman in age and stature, yet with all the gentle deference of a daughter, Fanny moved by the side of Mrs. Claire with a loving thoughtfulness, daily sharing her household duties. Some months before she had left school, but was still taking lessons in music and French, and devoting a portion of time to practice in drawing, for which she had a decided taste.

On the day after Mr. Claire's interview with Jasper, Mrs. Claire said to Fanny, with a seriousness of tone and manner that brought a look of surprise to her face—

"Come to my room with me, dear. I have something to say to you."

Fanny moved along by her side, wondering to herself what could be in her mother's mind. On entering the chamber, Mrs. Claire shut the door, and then, as she sat down, with an arm around the young girl's waist, she said, in a thoughtful, earnest voice—

"Fanny, I want you to tell me the first thing you recollect in life."

"The first thing, mother?" She smiled at a request so unexpected, and Mrs. Claire smiled in return, though from a different cause.

"Yes, dear. I have a reason for asking this. Now, let your thoughts run back—far back, and recall for me the very first thing you can recollect."

The countenance of Fanny grew thoughtful, then serious, and then a half-frightened look flashed over it.

"Why, mother," said she, "what can you mean? What do you want to know?"

"Your first recollection, dear?" returned Mrs. Claire, with an assuring smile, although her heart was full, and it required the most active self-control to prevent her feelings from becoming manifest in her voice.

"Well, let me see! The first? The first? I was playing on the floor with a dear little baby? It was our Edie, wasn't it?"

"Yes—so far your memory is correct. I remember the time to which you refer as perfectly as if but a week had passed. Now, dear, try if you can recall any thing beyond that."

"Beyond that, mother? Oh, why do you ask? You make me feel so strangely. Can it be that some things I have thought to be only the memory of dreams, are indeed realities?"

"What are those things, my child?"

"I have a dim remembrance of a pale, but beautiful woman who often kissed and caressed me—of being in a sick-room—of a strange confusion in the house—of riding in a carriage with father to a funeral. Mother! is there any thing in this; if so, what does it mean?"

"That woman, Fanny," said Mrs. Claire, speaking with forced composure, "was your mother."

The face of the young girl grew instantly pale; her lips parted; and she gasped for breath. Then falling forward on the bosom of Mrs. Claire, she sobbed—

"Oh, mother! mother! How can you say this?

It cannot, it cannot be. You are my own, my only mother."

"You did not receive your life through me, Fanny," replied Mrs. Claire, so soon as she could command her voice, for she too was overcome by feeling—"but in all else I am your mother; and I love you equally with my other children. If there has ever been a difference, it has all been in your favour."

"Why, why did you destroy the illusion under which I have so long rested?" said Fanny, when both were more composed. "Why tell me a truth from which no good can flow? Why break in upon my happy ignorance with such a chilling revelation? Oh, mother, mother! Forgive me, if I say you have been cruel."

"Not so, my child. Believe me, that nothing but duty would have ever driven me to this avowal. You are now at woman's legal age. You have a guardian, in whose hands your father, at his death, left, for your benefit, some property; and this person now desires to settle the estate, and transfer to you what remains."

Bewildered, like one awakening from a dream, Fanny listened to this strange announcement. And it was some time before she really comprehended her true position.

"Not your child—a guardian—property!—What does it all mean? Am I really awake, mother?"

"Yes, dear, you are awake. It is no dream, believe me," was the tender reply of Mrs. Claire. "But, remember, that all this does not diminish our love for you—does not remove you in the least from our

affections. You are still our child, bound to us by a thousand intertwining chords."

But little more passed between them at this interview. Fanny asked for no more particulars, and Mrs. Claire did not think it necessary to give any further information. Fanny soon retired to her own chamber, there to commune with her thoughts, and to seek, in tears, relief to her oppressed feelings.

The meeting of Claire with Fanny, on his return home, was affecting. She met him with a quivering lip and moistened eyes, and, as she laid her cheek against his breast, murmured in a sad, yet deeply affectionate voice—

"My father!"

"My own dear child!" quickly replied Claire, with emotion.

And then both stood for some time silent. Leading her to a seat, Claire said tenderly—

"I have always loved you truly, and now you are dearer to me than ever."

"My more than father," was her simple response.

"My own dear child!" said Mr. Claire, kissing her fondly. "We have ever blessed the day on which you came to us from God."

Words would only have mocked their feelings, and so but few words passed between them, yet how full of thoughts crowding upon thoughts were their minds—how over-excited their hearts with new emotions of love.

After the younger members of the family had retired on that evening, Mr. and Mrs. Claire and Fanny were alone together. All three were in a calmer state of mind. Fanny listened with deep at-

tention, her hand shading her countenance so as to conceal its varying expression, to a brief history of her parentage. Of things subsequent to the time of her entrance into her present home, but little was said. There was an instinctive delicacy on the part of Claire and his wife, now that Fanny was about coming into the possession of property, which kept back all allusion to the sacrifices they had made, and the pain they had suffered on her account, in their contentions with her guardian. In fact, this matter of property produced with them a feeling of embarrassment. They had no mercenary thoughts in regard to it—had no wish to profit by their intimate and peculiar relation. And yet, restricted in their own income, and with a family growing daily more expensive, they understood but too well the embarrassment which would follow, if any very important change were made in their present external relations. To explain every thing to Fanny, would, they knew, lead to an instant tender of all she possessed. But this they could not do; nor had they a single selfish desire in regard to her property. If things could remain as they were, without injustice to Fanny, they would be contented; but they were not altogether satisfied as to the amount they were receiving for her maintenance. It struck them as being too much; and they had more than once conferred together in regard to its reduction.

The first thing to be done was to make Fanny comprehend her relation to Mr. Jasper, her guardian, and his wish to settle up the estate of her father, and transfer to her, or her representative, the property that remained in his hands.

"I will leave all with you, father," was the very natural response made to this. "All I have is yours. Do just as you think best."

On the next day a power of attorney in the name of Edward Claire was executed; and, as Jasper was anxious to get the business settled, every facility thereto was offered. Claire examined the will of Mr. Elder, in which certain property was mentioned, and saw that it agreed with the guardian's statement. All the accounts were scrutinized; and all the vouchers for expenditure compared with the various entries. Every thing appeared correct, and Claire expressed himself entirely satisfied. All legal forms were then complied with; and, in due time, the necessary documents were prepared ready for the signature of Claire, by which Jasper would be freed from the nervous anxiety he had for years felt whenever his thoughts went forward to this particular point of time.

On the evening preceding the day when a consummation so long and earnestly looked for was to take place, Jasper, with his mind too much absorbed in business troubles to mingle with his family, sat alone in his library, deeply absorbed in plans and calculations. His confidence in fortune and his own prudence had been growing weaker, daily; and now it seemed to him as if a great darkness were gathering all around. He had fully trusted in himself; alas! how weak now seemed to him his human arm; how dim the vision with which he would penetrate the future. He was mocked of his own overweening and proud confidence.

This was his state of mind when a servant came

to the library-door, and announced a gentleman who wished to see him.

"What is his name?" asked Jasper.

"He said it was no difference. He was a friend."

"It might make a great difference," Jasper muttered in an undertone. "Show him up," he said aloud.

The servant retired, and Jasper waited for his visitor to appear. He was not long in suspense. The door soon reopened, and a man, poorly clad, and with a face bearing strong marks of intemperance and evil passions, came in.

"You do not know me," said he, observing that the merchant, who had risen to his feet, did not recognise him.

Jasper shook his head.

"Look closer." There was an air of familiarity and rude insolence about the man.

"Martin!" exclaimed Jasper, stepping back a few paces. "Is it possible!"

"Quite possible, friend Jasper," returned the man, helping himself to a chair, and sinking into it with the air of one who felt himself at home.

Surprise and perplexity kept the merchant dumb for some moments. He would quite as lief have been confronted with a robber, pistol in hand.

"I do not wish to see you, Martin," said he, at length, speaking in a severe tone of voice. "Why have you intruded on me again? Are you not satisfied? Have you no mercy?"

"None, Leonard Jasper, none," replied the man

scowling "I never knew the meaning of the word —no more than yourself."

"You are nothing better than a robber," said the merchant, bitterly.

"I only share with bolder robbers their richer plunder," retorted the man.

"I will not bear this, Martin. Leave my presence."

"I will relieve you certainly," said the visitor, rising, "when you have done for me what I wish. I arrived here, to-day, penniless; and have called for a trifling loan to help me on my way North."

"Loan! what mockery! I will yield no further to your outrageous demands. I was a fool ever to have feared the little power you possess. Go, sir! I do not fear you."

"I want your check for two hundred dollars—no more," said Martin, in a modified tone—"I will not be hard on you. Necessity drives me to this resort: but I hope never to trouble you again."

"Not a dollar," replied Jasper, firmly. "And now, my friend, seek some other mode of sustaining yourself in vice and idleness. You have received from me your last contribution. In settling the estate of Reuben Elder to the entire satisfaction of all parties, I have disarmed you. You have no further power to hurt."

"You may find yourself mistaken in regard to my power," replied Martin as he made a movement toward the door, and threw back upon the merchant a side-glance of the keenest malignity. "Many a foot has been stung by the reptile it spurned."

The word "stay" came not to Jasper s lips. He was fully in earnest. Martin paused, with his hand on the door, and said—

"One hundred dollars will do."

"Not a copper, if it were to save you from the nether regions!" cried Jasper, his anger and indignation o'erleaping the boundaries of self-control.

He was alone in the next moment. As his excitement cooled down, he felt by no means indifferent to the consequences which might follow this rupture with Martin. More than one thought presented itself, which, if it could have been weighed calmly a few minutes before, would have caused a slightly modified treatment of his unwelcome visitor.

But having taken his position, Jasper determined to adhere to it, and brave all consequences.

While Claire was yet seated at the breakfast table on the next morning, word was brought that a gentleman was in the parlour and wished to see him.

On entering the parlour, he found there a man of exceedingly ill appearance, both as to countenance and apparel.

"My name is Martin," said this person—"though you do not, I presume, know me."

Claire answered that he was to him an entire stranger.

"I have," said the man, speaking in a low, confidential tone of voice, "became cognisant of certain facts, which it much concerns you, or at least your adopted daughter, Fanny Elder, to know."

For a few moments, Claire was overcome with surprise.

"Concerns Fanny Elder to know! What do you mean, sir?"

"Precisely what I say. There has been a great fraud committed; and I know all the ins and the outs of it!"

"By whom?" asked Claire.

"Ah!" replied the visitor, "that we will come to after a while."

"Upon whom, then?"

"Upon the estate of Ruben Elder, the father of your adopted daughter."

Not liking either the man's appearance or manner, Claire said, after a moment's reflection—

"Why have you called to see me?"

"To give the information I have indicated—provided, of course, that you desire to have it."

"On what terms do you propose to act in this matter? Let us understand each other in the beginning."

"I can put you in the way of recovering for Miss Elder from twenty to a hundred thousand dollars, out of which she has been cheated. But, before I give you any information on the subject, I shall require an honourable pledge on your part, as well as written agreement, to pay me twenty per cent. of the whole amount recovered. Will you give it?"

Claire bent his head in thought for some moments. When he looked up he said—

"No, sir. I can make no compact with you of this kind."

"Very well, sir That closes the matter," re

plied Martin, rising. "If you will not buy a fortune at so small a cost, you deserve to be poor. How far your conscience is clear in respect to Miss Elder, is another matter. But, perhaps you don't credit what I say. Let me give you a single hint. Fanny Elder was missing once for three days. I had a hand in that affair. Do you think she was carried off, and taken to another city for nothing? If so, you are wonderfully mistaken. But good morning, sir. If you should, on reflection, change your mind, you can hear of me by calling at the office of Grind, the lawyer."

"Good morning," returned Claire, showing not the least disposition to retain the man, toward whom he experienced a strong feeling of dislike and sense of repulsion.

Martin lingered a few moments, and then went out, leaving Claire bewildered by a rush of new thoughts.

CHAPTER XX.

THE meeting of Claire and Jasper, for the final settlement of Mr. Elder's estate, was to take place at the office of Grind, at ten o'clock. Before keeping his appointment, the former turned over in his mind, with careful deliberation, the circumstances which had just occurred; and the more he thought of it, the better satisfied was he that a fraud had been committed. The author of that fraud could

be no one else but the guardian of Fanny; of whose honesty Claire had, with good reason, no very high opinion. His conclusion was, not to accept, at present, a settlement of the estate.

With an uneasy foreboding of evil—he was, in fact, rarely now without that feeling—Leonard Jasper took his way to the office of Grind. Notwithstanding he had defied Martin, he yet feared him. But he was so near to the point of comparative safety, that he hoped soon to be past all real danger from this quarter. Too little time had elapsed, since he parted with him, for Martin to see Claire, even if a thought of assailing him in that quarter had crossed his mind. So Jasper believed. How sadly taken by surprise was he, therefore, when, on meeting Claire, the latter said—

"Since I saw you yesterday, a matter has come to my knowledge which I feel bound to investigate, before proceeding any farther in this business."

As if struck by a heavy blow, Jasper moved a pace or two backward, while an instant pallor overspread his face. Quickly recovering himself, he said—

"Explain yourself, Edward. What matter has come to your knowledge?"

"On that subject I would prefer speaking with you alone," replied Claire.

"This room is at your service," said Grind, rising and retiring toward his front office. "You will be altogether free from intrusion." And he passed out, closing the door behind him.

"Edward," said Jasper, in as firm a voice as he could assume, "What is the meaning of this? You look at me with an expression of countenance, and

have spoken in a tone that implies a belief on your part that I have not acted fairly in the matter of this guardianship."

"Such, at least, is my impression," replied Claire, firmly.

"Have you come here to insult me, sir?" Jasper drew himself up with an offended manner.

"No, Mr. Jasper. I have no such intention. All I purpose is, to ascertain how far certain information received by me this morning is correct."

"What information?"

The merchant became a good deal agitated.

"A man named Martin called on me"——

"Martin! oh, the wretch! My curses rest on him, for a base betrayer!"

Claire was startled at the effect produced by his mention of the name of Martin. Jasper, on hearing this name, believed that every thing had been divulged, and, in the bitterness and despair of this conviction, threw off all concealment. His countenance, which had partly gained its usual colour, became pallid again, while large beads of sweat oozed from the relaxed pores and stood upon his forehead. Moving back a step or two, he sank into a chair, and averting his face, sat struggling with himself to regain the mastery over his feelings.

How changed, in a few brief years, had become the relation of these two men. The poor, humble, despised, but honest clerk, now stood erect, while the merchant cowered before him in humiliation and fear.

"Edward," said Jasper, as soon as he had sufficient composure of mind to think somewhat clearly

and speak calmly, "What do you purpose doing in this matter?"

"What is right, Mr. Jasper," answered Claire, firmly. "That is my duty."

"Ruin! ruin! ruin!" exclaimed Jasper, in a low voice, again losing command of himself, and wringing his hands hopelessly. "Oh! that it should have come to this!"

Astonished as Claire was by what he now heard and saw, he felt the necessity of preserving the most entire self-possession. When Jasper again put the question—

"What do you purpose doing, Edward?" he replied.

"I shall be better able to answer that question when I have all the particulars upon which to make up a decision. At present, I only know that a large amount of property has been withheld from Miss Elder; and that I have only to bring this man Martin into a court of justice to have every thing made clear."

"And this you purpose doing?"

"I shall do so, undoubtedly; unless the object to be gained by such a course is secured in another way."

"Quite as much, believe me, Edward, can be gained through private arrangement as by legal investigation," returned Jasper, his manner greatly subdued. "You and I can settle every thing, I am sure, between ourselves; and, as far as my ability will carry me, it shall be to your entire satisfaction. I have greatly mistaken your character or you will take no pleasure in destroying me."

"Pleasure in destroying you?" Claire was still further affected with surprise. "In no man's destruction could I take pleasure."

"I believe you Edward. And now let me give you a history of this matter from the beginning. You will know better what course to pursue when you comprehend it fully."

And then, to the astonished ears of Claire, Jasper related how, through the man Martin, he became possessed of the fact that the supposed almost valueless piece of land in Pennsylvania which Mr. Elder had taken to secure a debt of five hundred dollars, contained a rich coal deposite—and how, as executor to his estate, and the guardian of his child, he had by presenting the child in person before commissioners appointed by the court, obtained an order for the sale of the land, with the declared purpose of investing the proceeds in some productive property. It was for this that he had been so anxious to get Fanny, and for this that he carried her off forcibly, although his agency in the matter did not appear. He then related how, in the sale, he became the real purchaser; and how, afterward, the tract, as coal land, was sold to a company for nearly a hundred thousand dollars.

"But Edward," said Jasper, as he concluded his humiliating narrative, "I am worse off to-day than if I had never made this transaction. It gave me a large amount of capital for trade and speculation, but it also involved me in connections, and led me into schemes for money-making, that have wellnigh proved my ruin. In all truth, I am not, this day,

worth one-half of what I received for that property."

Jasper ceased speaking; but astonishment kept Claire silent.

"And now, Edward," resumed the former, "I am ready to make restitution as far as in my power lies. You can drag me into court, and thus blast my reputation; or, you can obtain for Miss Elder as much, or even more, than you would probably get by law—for, if driven into the courts, I will contend to the last moment—through an amicable arrangement. Which course are you disposed to take?"

"I have no desire to harm you, Mr. Jasper—none in the world. If the terms of settlement which you may offer are such as, under all the circumstances, I feel justified in accepting, I will meet your wishes. But you must bear in mind that, in this matter, I am not acting for myself."

"I know—but your judgment of the case must determine."

"True—and in that judgment I will endeavour to hold an equal balance."

The two men now retired from the lawyer's office; and, ere parting, arranged a meeting for that evening at the store of Jasper, where they could be entirely alone. For two or three successive evenings these conferences were continued, until Claire was entirely satisfied that the merchant's final offer to transfer to the possession of Fanny Elder four houses, valued at five thousand dollars each, in full settlement of her father's estate, was the very best

he could do; and far more than he would probably obtain if an appeal were made to the law.

As quickly as this transfer could be made, it was done. Not until the long-desired documents, vouching for the equitable settlement of the estate, were in Jasper's hands, did he breathe freely. Oh! through what an ordeal he had passed. How his own pride, self-consequence, and self-sufficiency had been crushed out of him! And not only in spirit was he humbled and broken. In his anxiety to settle up the estate of Mr. Elder, and thus get the sword that seemed suspended over his head by a single hair, removed, he had overstepped his ability. The houses referred to were burdened with a mortgage of nearly ten thousand dallars; this had, of course, to be released; and, in procuring the money therefor, he strained to the utmost his credit, thus cutting off important facilities needed in his large, and now seriously embarrassed business.

It is the last pound that breaks the camel's back. This abstraction of money and property took away from Jasper just what he needed to carry him safely through a period of heavy payments, at a time when there was some derangement in financial circles. In less than a month from the time he settled the estate of Reuben Elder, the news of his failure startled the business community. He went down with a heavy plunge, and never again rose to the surface. His ruin was complete. He had trusted in riches. Gold was his god; and the idol had mocked him.

CHAPTER XXI.

Beyond what has already been written, there is not much, in the histories of those whom we have introduced, to be told, except briefly, worthy the reader's interested attention.

Martin, the old accomplice of Jasper, finding his power over that individual gone, and failing in the card he played against Claire's nice sense of honour and integrity of purpose, now turned, like an ill-natured, hungry cur, and showed his teeth to the man through whose advice he had so long been able to extort money from Jasper. He felt the less compunction in so doing, from the fact that Grind, angry with him for having been the agent of Jasper's final destruction, which involved him in a severe loss, had expressed himself in no measured terms—had, in fact, lashed him with most bitter and opprobrious words.

Several times, during the progress of events briefly stated in the concluding portions of the last chapter, Martin had, in his frequent visits to the lawyer, hinted, more or less remotely, at his great need of money. But to these intimations, Grind never gave the slightest response. At last the man said boldly—

"Mr. Grind, you must help me to a little money." This was directly after the failure of Jasper.

"I cannot do it," was the unequivocal reply. "You have, by your miserable vindictiveness, ruined Jasper, after having subsisted on him for years—a base return for all you owe him—and, in doing so, half destroyed me. You have killed the goose that laid the golden egg, and there is no one but yourself to thank for this folly."

"You must help me, Mr. Grind," said Martin, his brows knitting, and the muscles of his lips growing rigid. "You had a hand in that business as well as Jasper; you took a big slice, if he did keep the major part of the loaf; and so I have a right to ask some slight return for important service rendered."

"What! This to me!" exclaimed Grind, roused to instant excitement.

"This to you," was the cool, deliberate answer.

"You have mistaken your man," returned the lawyer, now beginning to comprehend Martin more thoroughly. "I understand my whole relation to this affair too well to be moved by any attempt at extortion which you can make. But I can tell you a little secret, which it may be interesting for you to know."

"What is it?" growled the man.

"Why, that I hold the power to give you a term in the State's prison, whenever I may happen to feel inclined that way."

"Indeed!" Martin spoke with a cold, defiant sneer.

"I am uttering no vague threat. From the beginning, I have kept this trap over you, ready to spring, if need be, at a moment's warning."

"I suppose you thought me a poor fool, did you

not?" said Martin as coldly and contemptuously as before. "But you were mistaken. I have not been altogether willing to trust myself in your hands, without good advice from a limb of the law quite as shrewd as yourself."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Grind, somewhat startled by so unexpected a declaration.

"Plainly," was answered, "while I took your advice as to the surest way to act upon Jasper, I consulted another as to the means of protecting myself from you, if matters ever came to a pinch."

"Oh! Preposterous!" Grind forced a laugh. "That's only an afterthought."

"Is it. Hark!" Martin bent close to his ear, and uttered a few words in an undertone. Grind started as if stung by a serpent.

"Wretch!"

"It is useless to call ill names, my friend. I have you in my power; and I mean to keep you there. But I shall not be very hard on you. So, don't look so awfully cut down."

For once the scheming, unscrupulous lawyer found himself outwitted. His tool had proved too sharp for him. Without a doubt he was in his power to an extent by no means agreeable to contemplate. Grind now saw that conciliation was far better than antagonism.

When Martin retired from the lawyer's office, he had in his pocket a check for two hundred dollars, while behind him was left his solemn pledge to leave the city for New Orleans the next day. The pledge, when given, he did not intend to keep; and it was not kept, as Grind soon afterward learned, to his

sorrow. A drunkard and a gambler, it did not take Martin long to see once more the bottom of his purse. Not until this occurred did he trouble the lawyer again. Then he startled him with a second visit, and, after a few sharp words, came off with another check, though for a less amount.

And for years, leech-like, Martin, sinking lower and lower all the time, continued his adhesion to the lawyer, abstracting continually, but in gradually diminishing sums, the money needed for natural life and sensual indulgence, until often his demands went not above a dollar. Grind, reluctantly as he yielded to these demands, believed it wiser to pay them than to meet the exposure Martin had it in his power to make. And so it went on, until, one day, to his inexpressible relief, Grind read in the morning papers an account of the sudden and violent death of his enemy. His sleep was sounder on the night that followed than it had been for a long, long time.

Of Edward Claire, and his happy family—not happy merely from an improved external condition, for the foundation of their happiness was laid in a deeper ground—we have not much to relate.

When Claire brought to Fanny the title-deeds of the property which he had recovered from Jasper, she pushed them back upon him, saying, as she did so—

"Keep them, father—keep them. All is yours."

"No, my dear child," replied Claire, seriously, yet with tenderness and emotion, "all is not mine. All is yours. This property, through a wise Providence, has come into your possession. I have no right to it"

"If it is mine, father," said Fanny, "have I not a right to do with it what I please?"

"In a certain sense you have."

"Then I give it all to you—you, my more than father!"

"For such a noble tender, my dear child, I thank you in the very inmost of my heart. But I cannot accept of it, Fanny."

"Why not, father? Why not? You have bestowed on me more than wealth could buy? I know something of what you have borne and suffered for me. Your health, now impaired, was broken for me. Oh, my father! can I ever forget that? Can I ever repay you all I owe? Were the world's wealth mine, it should be yours."

Overcome by her feelings, Fanny wept for some time on the breast of him she knew only as her father; and there the interview closed for the time.

Soon after it was renewed; and the occasion of this was an advantageous business offer made to Claire by Mr. Melleville, if he could bring in a capital of twelve thousand dollars. Two of the houses received from Jasper, with some stocks, were sold to furnish this capital, and Claire, after his long struggle, found himself in a safe and moderately profitable business; and, what was more, with a contented and thankful spirit. Of what treasures was he possessed? Treasures of affection, such as no money could buy; and, above all, the wealth of an approving conscience.

Mrs. Claire—happy wife and mother!—how large too was her wealth. From the beginning she had possessed the riches which have no wings—spiritual

riches, that depend on no worldly changes, laid up in the heaven of her pure mind, where moth could not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. The better worldly fortune that now came added to her happiness, because it afforded the means of giving to their children higher advantages, and procured for them many blessings and comforts to which they were hitherto strangers.

Five years, passed under an almost cloudless sky, succeeded, and then the sweet home circle was broken by the withdrawal of one whose presence made perpetual sunshine. One so good, so lovely, so fitted in every way to form the centre of another home circle as Fanny Elder, could hardly remain unwooed or unwon. Happily, in leaving the paternal haven, her life-boat was launched on no uncertain sea. The character of her husband was based on those sound, religious principles, which regard justice to man as the expression of love to God.

A few weeks after the husband of Fanny had taken his lovely young wife to his own home, Claire waited upon him for the purpose of making a formal transfer of his wife's property.

"There are four houses," said Claire, in describing the property; "besides twelve thousand dollars which I have in my business. A portion of this latter I will pay over; on the balance, while it remains"——

"Mr. Claire," returned the young man, interrupting him, "the house you now live in, Fanny says, is your property—also the capital in your business."

"No—no—no. This is not so. I do not want, and I will not keep a dollar of her patrimony."

"You are entitled to every thing, in good right," said the young man, smiling. "But we will consent to take one-half as a good start in life."

"But, my dear sir"——

We will not, however, record the arguments, affirmations, protestations, etc., made by each party in this contention, but drop the curtain, and leave the reader to infer the sequel. He cannot go very far wide of the truth.

THE END.

STEREOTYPED BY L. JOHNSON AND CO.
PHILADELPHIA.

SHADOWS AND SUNBEAMS.

By T. S. ARTHUR.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year, 1859, by

DUANE RULISON,

in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

PHILADELPHIA.
STEREOTYPED BY S. A. GEORGE
607 SANSOM STREET

A Word with the Reader.

ARE you under a cloud, reader? Or, does the sunshine lie broad on your summer way? If the shadows are thick around you, fear not, faint not, falter not—the sun is bright as ever in the heavens above, and the cloudy curtains will, ere long, be drawn aside; but, if all is brightness and beauty, walk not onward too confidently, for shadows as well as sunbeams are on every path of life, and yours will be no exception. Yet, bear this in mind; we make, in nearly all cases, our own shadow and our own sunlight. If we were wise and good, no clouds would obscure our firmament; it is from our ignorance and selfishness that the murky exhalations arise which darken the sky above us. Let us, then, seek for heavenly Wisdom, and she will take us by the hand and lead us on to Goodness. The

way in which we go, having Wisdom for a guide, will be darkened by few shadows, and these will grow fewer and feebler with every advancing footstep.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE COLPORTEUR	9
WORSE ENEMIES THAN LIONS AND TIGERS	18
A LESSON FROM THE BEES	27
THE BROKEN HEART	34
THE LONE OLD MAN	89
A NEW EXPERIENCE IN LIFE	103
THE LITTLE MAID OF ALL WORK	118
LOOK AT THE BRIGHT SIDE	131
WHAT HAPPENED TO JOE BARKER	142
ONE OF THE SOLVENT CLASS	162
THE COQUETTE	185
MR. WINKLEMAN AT HOME	19[illegible]
THE MAN AND THE DEMON	20[illegible]

SHADOWS AND SUNBEAMS.

THE COLPORTEUR.

"WHICH way, stranger?" said a rough-looking farmer, to a man who was carrying a well-filled valise. The latter was in the act of raising the latch of a gate, which opened from the public road into a narrow lane leading to a small country-house of no very inviting aspect.

The person thus addressed turned and fixed a pair of mild, yet steady and penetrating eyes, upon the speaker.

"Which way, stranger?" was repeated, though in modified and more respectful tones.

"Who lives there?" said the stranger, pointing to the house just in view from the road.

"Dick Jones," was answered.

"What kind of a man is he?" next inquired the stranger.

"Rather a hard case. You'd better not go there."

"Why?"

"Aint you the man that sells Bibles and talks religion?"

"Suppose I am?"

'Take a friend's advice then, and keep away from Dick Jones. He'll insult you—may be, do worse."

"I reckon not," replied the colporteur, for such he was.

"He will, as sure as fate. I've heard him say, over and over again, that if one of you Bible-sellers dared to come inside of his gate, he'd set his dogs on you. And he's just the man to keep his word. So, take a friend's advice, and let him alone. No good will come of it."

"Has he a wife and children?" inquired the colporteur.

"A wife and two little boys."

"What kind of a woman is his wife?"

"Oh, she'll do well enough. But neighbours don't go there much on account of her husband, who is a very imp of Satan, if the truth must be spoken."

"Like the blessed Master," was replied to this, "I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Of all things in the world, the Bible is most needed at Dick Jones's; and I am bound to place one there."

"Oh, very well. Follow your own bent," said the farmer, slightly annoyed at the other's pertinacity. "You'll remember that I warned you, when his dogs are at your heels or his horsewhip over your shoulders. So, good morning to you."

"Good morning," returned the stranger, cheerfully, as he threw open the ill-hung gate, and entered the forbidden grounds of Dick Jones.

Now, our brave friend, the colporteur, was not a

strong, robust man, able to meet and resist physical violence. In the use of carnal weapons he had no skill. But he had a confident spirit, a strong heart, and, above all, an unwavering confidence in the protecting power of Him in whose service he was devoting his life.

Even on the grounds of Dick Jones the birds sang sweetly, the cool breezes sported amid the leafy branches, and the breaths of a thousand flowers mingled their fragrance on the air; and, even as the colporteur trod these grounds, he felt and enjoyed the tranquil beauty and peace of nature. There was no shrinking in his heart. He was not in terror of the lions that crouched on his path. Soon he stood at the open door of a house, around which was no air of comfort, nor a single vestige of taste.

"Who's there? What's wanted?" was the repulsive salutation of a woman, who hurriedly drew an old handkerchief across her brown neck and half exposed bosom, on seeing a stranger.

"May God's peace be on this house!" said the colporteur, in a low, reverent voice, as he stood, one foot on the ground, and the other across the threshold.

A change passed instantly over the woman's face. Its whole expression softened. But she did not invite the stranger to enter.

"Go—go," she said, in a hurried voice. "Go away quickly! My husband will be here directly, and he——"

She paused, leaving the sentence unfinished, as if reluctant to speak what was in her mind.

"Why should I go away quickly?" asked the stranger, as he stepped into the room, taking off his hat respectfully, and seating himself in a chair. "I wish to see and speak with your husband. Mr. Jones, I believe, is his name?"

"Yes, sir, his name is Jones. But he don't want to see you."

"Don't want to see *me!* How do you know? Who am I?"

"I don't know your name, sir," answered the woman, timidly; "but I know who you are. You go around selling good books and talking religion to the people."

"True enough, Mrs. Jones," said the colporteur, seriously, yet with a pleasant smile on his face as he spoke. "And I have come to have a little talk with your husband, and see if I can't get him to buy some of my good books. Have you a Bible?"

"No, sir. My husband says he hates the Bible. When we were first married, I had an old Testament, but he never could bear to see me reading it. Somehow, it got lost; I always thought he carried it away, or threw it into the fire. He won't talk to you, sir. He won't have your books. He's a very bad tempered man, sometimes, and I'm afraid he'll do you harm. O sir, I wish you would go away."

But, instead of showing any alarm or anxiety at Mrs. Jones's account of her husband, the stranger commenced opening his valise, from which he soon produced a plainly bound copy of the Bible.

"How long since you were married?" asked the

colporteur, as he opened the Bible and commenced turning over the leaves.

"Twelve years come next May, sir," was answered.

"How long is it since you lost the Testament?"

"Most eleven years."

"Do you go to church?"

"To church!" The woman looked surprised at the question. "Dear sakes, no! I haven't been inside of a church since I was married."

"Wouldn't you like to go?"

"What 'ud be the use? I wouldn't say 'church to Dick for the world."

"Then you haven't read the Bible yourself, nor heard anybody else read it, since you lost the Testament?"

"No, sir."

"You shall have that blessed privilege once again in your life," said the stranger, raising the book toward his eyes, and making preparation to read.

"Indeed, sir, I'm afraid. I'm looking for my husband every minute," interposed the woman. "He's always said he'd kick the first Bible-seller out of his house that dared to cross his door. And he'll do it. He's very wicked and passionate, sometimes. Do, sir, please go away. If I had any money, I'd take the Bible and hide it from him; but I haven't. Please don't stay any longer. Don't begin to read. If he comes in and finds you reading, he'll be mad enough to kill you."

But, for all this, the colporteur sat unmoved. As the woman ceased speaking, he commenced reading to her the beautiful chapter from our Lord's sermon

on the mount, beginning with—"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." As he proceeded in a low, distinct, reverential voice, the woman's agitation gradually subsided, and she leaned forward listening more and more intently, until all thoughts and feelings were absorbed in the holy words that were filling her ears. When the colporteur finished the chapter, he raised his eyes to the face of the woman, and saw that it was wet with tears. At that instant, a form darkened the door. It was the form of Dick Jones.

"Ha!" he exclaimed in a harsh voice. "What's this? Who are you?"

Comprehending now the scene before him, Jones began swearing awfully, at the same time ordering the stranger to leave his house, threatening to kick him from the door if he didn't move instantly. The tearful wife stepped between her husband and the object of his wrath; but he swept her aside roughly and with curses.

"Go, before I fling you into the road!" And the strong man, every iron muscle tense with anger, stood towering above the stranger's slender form, like an eagle above its helpless prey.

How calm and fearless the stranger sat, his mild, deep, almost spiritual eyes, fixed on those of his mad assailant.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

Low yet thrilling was the voice in which these words found almost spontaneous utterance. He had taken no forethought as to what he should say.

Hither he had come at the prompting of duty, and now, when a raging lion was in his path, he shrunk not back in terror, but resting in a Divine power, moved steadily onward.

"Clear out from here, I say!" The voice of Dick Jones was angry still; yet something of its evil purpose was gone.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is my strength and my life: of whom shall I be afraid?"

Neither loud nor in self-confidence was this spoken; else would it not have fallen on the ears of that evil-minded man with so strange a power.

"Why have you come here to trouble me? Go now—go, before I do you harm," said Dick Jones, greatly subdued in manner, and sinking into his chair as he spoke.

The colporteur, moved less by thought than impulse, opened the Bible which had been closed on the entrance of Jones, and commenced reading. All was still, now, save the low, eloquent voice of the stranger, as he read from the Holy Book. The wife of Jones, who had stood half paralyzed with terror in a distant part of the room, whither an impatient arm had flung her, seeing the wonderful change that was passing, stole quietly to her husband's side, and, bending her head, even as his was bent, listened, with an almost charmed attention to the Word of Life, as read by the man of God, who had penetrated the dense moral wilderness in which they had so long dwelt.

"Let us pray."

How strangely these words sounded! They seem-

ed spoken as from the heavens above them, and by a voice that they could not disregard.

Brief, yet earnest, and in fitting language, was the prayer then tearfully made, and responded to with tears. When the "Amen" was said, and the pious colporteur arose from his knees, what a change had taken place! The raging lion had become a lamb. The strong, wicked contemner of the good, was gentle and teachable as a little child.

Once more the colporteur read from the Holy Book, while the man and his wife listened with bent heads, and earnest, thoughtful faces.

"Shall I leave you this Bible?" said he, rising at length, and making a motion to retire.

"If you will sell it to us," said Dick Jones.

"It is yours on any terms you please. The price is low. I have other good books; but this is the best of all, for it is God's own Book, in which he speaks to his erring, unhappy children, saying to them, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Read this first, my friends; read it in the morning, as soon as you rise, and in the evening before you retire. Read it together, and, if you feel an impulse to pray, kneel down, and silently, if you cannot speak aloud, say over the words of that beautiful prayer the Saviour taught his disciples,—the prayer your mothers taught you when you were innocent children—'Our Father, who art in heaven.' In a few weeks I will pass this way again. Shall I call to see you?"

"Oh yes Do call," said Jones, his voice trem-

bling; though it was plain he struggled hard with the flood of new emotions that was sweeping over him.

"May God's peace rest upon this house!" The stranger stood with lifted hands and head bent reverently for a moment. Then, turning away, he passed from the door, and, in a few moments, was out of sight.

A month later the colporteur came again that way. How different was his reception at the house of Dick Jones! The moment the eyes of the latter rested upon him, it seemed as if a sunbeam fell suddenly on his rugged features.

"All is well, I see." The colporteur spoke cheerfully, and with a radiant smile. "A Bible in the house is a blessing to its inmates."

"It has been a blessing to us," said the happy wife, her eyes full of tears. "Oh sir, we can never be done reading the Good Book. It seems, sometimes, as if the words were just written for us. And the children ask me, many times a day, if I won't read to them about Joseph and his brethren, the three Hebrew children, or Daniel in the den of lions. Often, when they have been so ill-natured and quarrelsome that I could do nothing with them, have I stopped my work, and sat down among them with the Bible, and began to read one of its beautiful stories. Oh, it acted like a charm! All anger would die instantly; and when I closed the book, and they went to their play again, I would not hear an ugly word among them, may be, for hours. And Richard, too—" she glanced toward her husband, who smiled, and she went on. "And Richard, too

—I haven't heard him swear an oath since you were here; and he isn't angry with things that can't be helped near as often as he used to be. Oh yes, indeed, sir; it is true. A Bible in the house is a blessing to its inmates."

"If that were the only fruit of my labour," said the colporteur, as he walked slowly and thoughtfully away from the house of Dick Jones an hour later, "it would be worth all the toil and sacrifice I have given to the work. But this is not the only good ground into which the seed I am scattering broadcast, as it were, has fallen. God's rain, and dew, and sunshine, are upon it, and it must spring up, and grow, and ripen to the harvest. Let me not grow faint or weary."

And with a stronger heart and a more earnest purpose he went on his way.

WORSE ENEMIES THAN LIONS AND TIGERS.

"Bad thoughts are worse enemies than lions and tigers."

Worse enemies? Yes, worse, a thousand fold! You may keep away from the path of a lion—you may avoid the spring of a tiger; but, if you cherish bad thoughts, a brood of stinging serpents is warmed to life in your bosom.

You hate that Erskine? Well, who is most

injured by your hate? You'll make him feel it! He can never know a tithe of the evil consequences you will experience from that bad passion, my friend. Have you ever heard the old Spanish proverb, "Curses, like chickens, come home to roost?" If so, it were well for you to ponder its meaning.

Perkins is an unhappy man. Why? Is he in extreme poverty? No; his basket and store have been largely increased, year by year. Is he in affliction? No; the finger of death has not yet rested on any of his household treasures. Why, then, is he unhappy? Because enemies to his peace are kept alive in his bosom—enemies that destroy more than lions and tigers. Bad thoughts, you mean. Yes; evil thoughts against his neighbours. Poor man! he is in the strange delusion that all generous thoughts and kind deeds toward others will be so much abstracted from his own enjoyment. He does not comprehend the meaning involved in the act of lighting a neighbour's candle. Light and warmth are not diminished, but more widely diffused. Perkins would laugh, sneeringly, at the man who spent half an hour in planting a tree, from which he had no hope of gathering fruit. Yet, while the other felt a glow of pleasure in the act, he would be unhappy because a neighbour's tree bore better fruit than his own.

Such a man was Perkins. He rarely smiled, except at some practical joke played off to the annoyance of somebody he did not fancy. Any thing like this, he enjoyed amazingly. At home, he was usually a silent, moody sort of man, greatly annoyed by trifles, and more disposed to interfere

with his children's sports, than to encourage playfulness and hilarity. Their noise and restlessness disturbed him. He loved his wife about as well as a man like him is capable of loving any thing out of himself; but he never studied how to give her pleasure, and was easily fretted, if, through her neglect or forgetfulness, his comfort were interfered with in the slightest degree.

Mr. Perkins had a neighbour named Ehrman, who was, from some cause, particularly offensive to him; and yet Ehrman was an unobtrusive man, and more inclined to think well than ill of others. Perhaps this was the very reason why Perkins did not like him—for good and evil are in natural antagonism. It so happened that the pleasant grounds of Perkins and Ehrman lay side by side. This gave the former occasion for much captious and ill-natured observation of his neighbour, whose doings were the subject of thought and comment far beyond any thing that he imagined.

One day, in passing homeward, Perkins called at a neighbour's, and said to him, "I believe I'll take that yellow rose you told me you wished to sell. I've been thinking since I saw you yesterday, that it will just match the one I have in the oval grass-plat by the front door, and produce a very fine effect. Don't you think so? Two dollars is the price you asked."

"It's too late, now, Mr. Perkins," returned the neighbour. "I sold it to Mr. Ehrman, this morning."

"You did!" The countenance of Perkins changed instantly.

"Yes; I understood you to decline taking it."

"You didn't understand any such thing!" Mr Perkins was already partially blind with passion.

"Beg your pardon," said the neighbour, with very natural indignation. "I did so understand you. And when Mr. Ehrman called this morning, and said he would like to have it for the rosery he was making in front of his house, I sold it to him without a thought of your desiring to possess it."

"He's making a rosery, is he? Humph! that's because I talked of it."

"I don't know any thing about that, Mr. Perkins Though it's my opinion that Mr. Ehrman never heard of your intention."

"Well, I know that he has heard of it. He couldn't have helped knowing my purpose, because I spoke of it to half a dozen people. And he knew I wanted this very rose. But he'll be sorry for crossing my path. Now mark my word for it!"

In this temper, Mr. Perkins turned his steps homeward, his mind so full of bad thoughts, that there was not room for a single good one to find entrance.

"O Edward," said Mrs. Perkins, as she met him at the door. There was a smile of welcome on her face, and gladness in her tones, for she had something very pleasant to tell her husband. But the moment her eyes rested on his face, her countenance fell, and she remained silent.

Not a word of greeting passed the lips of Mr. Perkins, nor did a single harsh line of his rigid features relax. Jostling his wife almost rudely, as he passed by her, he went through the house into the

garden beyond, with the manner of one who had some desperate purpose to accomplish. Taking up a spade, he returned through the house to the ornamental grass-plat in front, where stood a large yellow rose-bush, the buds of which were full and almost ready to break into blossom.

What is he going to do? Not destroy, in an outbreak of selfish passion, this beautiful flower, because a neighbour, whom he does not like, has become possessed of one equal in beauty? No; not so bad as that. He knows that transplanting the other rose, at this particular season, will check its growth. If he can't be the owner thereof, he is resolved that his rose shall be far more luxuriant, and so means to give it an extra share of culture. His purpose now, is simply to loosen the earth about the roots, so that sun, air, and dew may penetrate more freely. This he designs doing daily, and, by all human means, to incite it to a more vigorous growth.

"What are you going to do, papa? What are you going to do?" asks a sunny-haired child, coming close after her father, who has failed to give her the usual kiss on returning home. She is following him as much for the desired kiss, as from a feeling of curiosity in his movements. A dear, good child she is, and loves her father with all the tenderness of a young and guileless heart.

"Papa! papa!"—her hand is tugging at his garment—"what are you going to do?"

"Go back into the house!"

How pale and frightened the dear child looks! No wonder. Was it her father's voice—so full of

cruel anger? Was that dark, frowning brow, were those evil eyes, the brow and eyes of the parent toward whom her pure heart was gushing over with love? Alas! bad thoughts are worse than lions and tigers. How ruthlessly they destroy the gentle, loving, innocent things born of good affections in the heart. Filial tenderness—where is it now? The lions and tigers have destroyed, or driven it far away from the bosom of Mr. Perkins.

Frightened, disappointed, unhappy child! Slowly she goes back into the house, tears falling like rain over her cheeks and on her bosom, and her little heart almost bursting with sobs.

And now, under the excitement of his bad feelings, Mr. Perkins commences digging about his valued bush. There! His unsteady hands have made an unskilful stroke, and the largest and most beautifully headed stem has been parted from the root, and lies a ruin, with all its wealth of bursting buds, at his feet! A moment Mr. Perkins stands, as if paralyzed; then, with a bitter imprecation, he flings the spade madly from his hands. A yell of pain follows instantly. What now? Unhappy man! The enemies he has taken to his bosom have wrought, through him, a further injury. Poor old Neptune! It is scarcely a week since, faithful animal! you plunged into the river and bore safely to land the dear child whom her father has just driven away with frowns and angry words; and now your master, who caressed you then with grateful tenderness, has broken your leg with a blow!

"O Edward, Edward! That was a cruel act!" said his wife, in a rebuking voice. The unexpected

repulse and harsh temper of her husband had soured her feelings, and now she was moved by a hard and accusing spirit. "Thus have you rewarded the noble saviour of our child!"

"Peace, woman!" was his angry retort; and as he spoke, he passed hurriedly into the house. A moment after he returned with a loaded gun in his hand. There was a loud rifle crack. All is still! With that sharp report the poor dog's yells of anguish died on the air, for a leaden messenger of death had entered his generous heart. Not in anger was the deadly weapon aimed; but in sorrow and stern mercy. Ah, what an anguish of regret was at the heart of Mr. Perkins! How bitter was the sorrow that overwhelmed him like a flood! The enemies he had admitted into his bosom have already done a sad work of destruction.

What gloomy shadows rested on the household of Mr. Perkins at the going down of that evening's sun! Usually, as the curtains of darkness were drawn slowly over the jewelled sky, heart-rays, blending with the clear lamplight, made all within his dwelling brighter even than when daylight was abroad. But there were no heart-rays to go forth on that evening; and the lamp burned low and feeble, unable to disperse the enshrouding darkness that fell on every spirit like a pall.

For more than half the night, Mr. Perkins lay awake, striving in vain to steep his senses in forgetfulness—striving in vain to banish thoughts that deeply disturbed him with their unwelcome presence. Much as he suffered from self-condemnation—much as he blamed himself for the unkind spirit he had

displayed toward his family—he did not in the least soften toward Mr. Ehrman, whom he regarded as the real cause of all the unhappy events of the previous day. It was perfectly plain to him that this "miserable fellow," as he mentally called Ehrman, had heard of his desire to possess the yellow rose, and meanly anticipated him in its possession.

"I'll never forgive him for that act, as long as I live," he mentally exclaimed more than twenty times, as he moved, restlessly, on his pillow through the night. "He's the cause of all that has happened, and I'll make him repent of it, ere he's three months older."

Perkins had suffered the sun to go down upon his wrath, and when it arose in the clear blue heavens, the fires burned as fiercely as ever. Still were the enemies cherished, that had already destroyed so much—those bad thoughts which, quickly exciting kindred purposes, produce evil actions.

How silent and gloomy—we might almost say, sullen—passed the morning meal, usually a season of pleasant intercourse. Sleep, alas! had not calmed the elements which bad thoughts had lashed into unwonted disturbance. The child was still grieving for the death of the noble animal she had loved since light first dawned on her opening mind; the mother grieved also for this, while pain from other causes oppressed and saddened her feelings. The father was angry with himself for his half-insane conduct, but more angry with his neighbour Ehrman as the cause. And all this unhappiness arose in consequence of letting a few bad thoughts come into the mind! In truth, the moralist was right when

he said, "Bad thoughts are worse enemies than lions and tigers."

Forth from his shadowed dwelling went Mr. Perkins. No loving kiss or tender words were left behind him, as a blessing through the day for the loved and the loving.

Who is that entering through the gate? Not Mr. Ehrman, surely! Yes; it is the neighbour against whom Mr. Perkins has permitted himself to cherish so many bad thoughts and angry feelings. There is a manly unconsciousness of wrong in his face, and a pleasant smile, that tells of kind and neighbourly feelings, about his lips. It is in the heart of Mr. Perkins to insult him with words of bitter denunciation. But a certain self-respect and regard for appearances restrain him. The most that he accords is a cold and repulsive civility, which the other seems not to notice.

"I did not know," Mr. Ehrman says, "until I went over to Mr. Grant's last evening, that you had expressed a desire to have the yellow rose he offers for sale. When Mr. Grant told me of this, I at once declined taking it, and have called in this morning to say so. It will match the one you have in the other end of that oval grass-plat, beautifully; and make a finer effect than any thing I could produce with it. Don't think it will be any disappointment to me, Mr. Perkins; my heart is no way set upon it. Indeed, at the very time I was buying it from Grant, I half regretted that you were not the purchaser instead of myself; for I saw, at a glance, that it was just a match for yours, and was the only thing your beautiful oval wanted to balance the

arrangement of flowers, and make the effect perfect. So, consider the rose as your own. As I come home this evening, I will stop to admire it in its right position. Good morning!"

And ere Mr. Perkins can frame an answer, or give it utterance, the kind, generous, unselfish neighbour, against whom he has so causelessly indulged evil thoughts and envious feelings, is beyond the reach of his voice.

Reader, we have nothing further to relate. We close abruptly, and leave our story and its lesson with you. "Bad thoughts are worse enemies than lions and tigers." We pray you beware of them.

A LESSON FROM THE BEES.

A MURMUR of impatience came from the lips of young Wentworth, as, laying aside his palette and brushes, he took up his hat, and, with a worried manner, left the studio, where, with two or three young men, he was taking lessons and seeking to acquire skill in the art of painting. He was at work on the head of one of Raphael's Madonnas, and was, with the warm enthusiasm of a young artist, in love with the beautiful, seeking to transfer to his canvas the heavenly tenderness of her eyes, when a coarse jest, from the lips of a fellow-student, jarred harshly on his ears. It was this that had so disturbed him Out into the open air

the young man passed, but the bustle and confusion of the street did not in the least calm his excited state of feeling.

"A coarse, vulgar fellow!" he said, angrily, giving voice to his indignation against the student. "If he is to remain in the studio, I must leave it. I can't breathe the same atmosphere with one like him."

And he walked on, aimless, but with rapid steps. Soon he was opposite the window of a printseller. A gem of art caught his eye.

"Exquisite!" he exclaimed, as he paused and stood before the picture. "Exquisite! What grouping! What an atmosphere! What perspective!"

"Ha! ha!" laughed a rough fellow at his side, whose attention had been arrested by a comic print. "Ha! ha! ha!" And clasping his hands against his sides, he made the air ring with a coarse but merry peal. He understood his artist fully, and enjoyed this creation of his pencil.

"Brute!" came almost audibly from the lips of Wentworth, as all the beautiful images just conjured up faded from his mind. And off he started from the print-window in a fever of indignation against the vulgar fellow who had no more manners than to guffaw in the street at sight of low life in a picture. On he moved for the distance of one or two blocks, when he paused before another window full of engravings and paintings. A gem of a landscape, cabinet size, had just been placed in the window, and our young friend was soon enjoying its fine points.

"Who can be the artist?" he had just said to

himself, and was bending closer to examine the delicate treatment of a bit of water, over which a tree projected, when a puff of tobacco smoke stole past his check, and found its way to his nostrils. Now, Wentworth was fond of a good cigar, and the fragrance that came to his sense on this particular occasion was delicate enough of its kind. In itself, it would have been agreeable rather than offensive; but the vulgarity of street-smoking he detested, and the fact of this vulgarity came now to throw his mind again from its even balance.

"Whew!" he ejaculated, backing away from the window, and leaving his place to one less sensitive, or capable of a deeper abstraction of thought when any thing of true interest was presented.

"I will ride out into the country," said he. "There, with nature around me, I can find enjoyment." So he entered an omnibus, the route of which extended beyond the city bounds. Alas! here he also found something to disturb him. There was a woman with a lapdog in her arms, and another with a poor, sick child, that cried incessantly. A man, partially intoxicated, entered, after he had ridden a block or two, and crowded down by his side. Beyond this, the sensitive Wentworth could endure nothing. So he pulled the checkstring, paid his fare, and resumed his place on the pavement, muttering to himself as he did so—

"I'd a thousand times rather walk than ride in such company."

Two miles from the city resided a gentleman of taste and education, who had manifested no little interest in our excitable young friend. To visit

him was the purpose of Wentworth when he entered the stage, which would have taken him within half a mile of his pleasant dwelling. He purposed to walk the whole distance rather than ride with such disagreeable companions. The day was rather warm. Our young artist found it pleasant enough while the pavement lay in the shadow of contiguous houses. But, fairly beyond these, the direct rays of the sun fell upon his head, and the clouds of dust from passing vehicles almost suffocated him. Just a little in advance of him, for a greater part of the distance, kept the omnibus, from which the women with the lapdog and crying child got out only a square beyond the point where he left the coach. The drunken man also soon left the vehicle. Tired and overheated, Wentworth now hurried forward, making signs to the driver: but, as the driver did not look around, his signs were all made in vain; and he was the more fretted at this from the fact that a passenger, who was riding in the omnibus, had his face turned toward him all the time, and was, so our pedestrian imagined, enjoying his disappointment.

Hot, dusty, and weary was our young artist, when, after walking the whole distance, he arrived at the pleasant residence of the gentleman we have mentioned.

"Ah, my young friend! How are you to-day? A visit, I need not tell you, is always agreeable. But you look heated and tired. You have walked too fast."

"Too far, rather," said Wentworth "I have come all the way on foot"

"How so? Did you prefer walking?"

"Yes; to riding in the stage with a crying child, a lapdog, and a drunken man."

"The drunken man was bad company, certainly. But the crying child and the lapdog were trifling matters."

"Not to me," answered Wentworth. "I despise a woman who nurses a lap-dog. The very sight frets me beyond endurance."

"Still, my young friend, if women will nurse lapdogs, you can't help it; and so, your wisest course would be to let the fact pass unobserved: or, at least uncared for. To punish yourself, as you have done to-day, because other people don't conform in all things just to your ideas of propriety is, pardon me, hardly the act of a wise man."

"I can't help it. I am too finely strung, I suppose—too alive to the harmonies of nature, and too quick to feel the jar of discord. Do you know to what you are indebted for this visit to-day?"

And Wentworth related, with a colouring of his own, the incidents just sketched for the reader; taking, as he did so, something of merit to himself for his course of action.

"Upon what were you at work?" asked his friend, when the young man finished speaking.

"On the beautiful Madonna, about which I told you at my last visit."

"Is it nearly completed?"

"A few more touches, and I would have achieved a triumph above any thing yet accomplished by my pencil. It was in the eyes that I failed to succeed. They are full of a divine tenderness, that only a

magic touch can give Raphael was inspired when he caught that look from heaven. I had risen, by intense abstraction of mind, into a perception of the true ideal I sought to gain, and the power to fix it all on canvas was flowing down into my hand, when the jar of discord produced by that vulgar fellow scattered every thing into confusion and darkness."

"And so the Madonna remains unfinished?"

"Yes, and I am driven from work. Here is another day added to my list of almost useless days."

The friend mused for a little while, and then said, somewhat sententiously—

"You must take a lesson from the bees, Henry."

"I will hear a lesson from your lips, but, as for the bees"—

And he shrugged his shoulders with an air that said—"I can learn but little from them."

"Let us walk into the garden," said the friend, rising.

And they went out among the leafy shrubs and blossoming plants, where butterflies folded their lazy wings, and the busy bees made all the air musical with their tiny hum.

"Now for the lesson," said the young artist, smiling. "A lesson from the bees. Here is a sprightly little fellow, just diving into the red cup of a honeysuckle. What lesson does he teach?"

"One that all of us may lay to heart. There is honey in the cup, and it is his business to gather honey. Just beside the crimson blossom, and even touching it, hangs an ugly worm, spinning out the thread of his winding-sheet; but the bee did not pass the flower, because of its offensive presence,

nor will he hasten from it until he has extracted the honey-dew. Now his work is accomplished; and now he has passed to that clover blossom, which his weight bends over against the leaves of a deadly night-shade. But the poisoned weed is no annoyance to him. So intently pursues he his search for honey, that he is unconscious of its presence. Now he buries himself in blushing rose-leaves, 'heeding not and caring not,' though a hundred sharp thorns bristle on the stem that supports the lovely flower. And now, full laden with the sweet treasure he sought, he is off on swift wing for the hive. Shall we observe the motions of another bee? Or, is the lesson clear?"

The countenance of Wentworth looked thoughtful, even serious. A little while he stood musing, as though his perceptions were not lucid. Then turning to his wise and gently reproving friend, he grasped his hand, saying, with a manner greatly subdued:—

"The lesson is clear. I will go back and finish my Madonna, though a dozen vulgar fellows haunt the studio. I will have no eyes nor ears for them. My own high purpose to excel, shall make me blind and deaf to any thing that would hinder my onward progress. Thanks for your lesson of the bees. I will never forget it. Like them, I will gather the honey of life from every rich flower in my way. Let the weeds grow nigh if they will. I shall not regard their presence."

THE BROKEN HEART.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN OLD PHYSICIAN.

About the time that Mr. S——, then holding a distinguished position in the fiscal world, completed his splendid mansion at Calverton, near Baltimore, which now forms the centre to the two wings of the County Almshouse, I was summoned to attend a case of illness in the immediate neighbourhood. The family, which was highly respectable and wealthy, I knew well by reputation, but had never before been called in to attend any of its members. Mr. O——, its head, was a retired merchant, who, during the war of 1812, had amassed a considerable fortune, and then retired from business. He now held the position of president of an insurance company, the duties of which office made it necessary for him to come to town every day.

Mr. O—— had four children, two sons and two daughters. One son was in business in this city, and the other was partner in a house in Cuba. The daughters were both married; but one of them had formed an unhappy union, and now resided at home, having parted with her husband. It was to see her that I was called in.

In order to give the reader a clear apprehension of all that I am about to relate, it will be necessary

for me to detail with some minuteness a portion of the previous history of the family; or, at least, so much of it as includes the daughter's marriage—*sacrifice*, I should rather say.

Mr. O—— was a proud, strong-minded, self-willed man, with manners that could attract when he wished to attract, strongly, or repel when he wished to repel, with equal force. He married one of those gentle, confiding, sensitive creatures, who will cling to a man if his love answers to her own deep passion as face answers to face in water, with an earnest devotion; and who, if her husband prove cold, arbitrary, selfish and self-willed, will—*cling to him still*, even though every green leaf withers for want of sustenance, and the branches that bear them become sapless.

Many years had not elapsed before Mrs. O—— discovered that her life was to be one of continued endurance. Her wishes were rarely consulted in any thing; and if they were, her husband was sure to see things in a light different from the one in which she viewed it. He never yielded any thing to her views or preferences; in fact, he never dreamed that he was called upon to do this. At his store and counting-room, every thing moved on as his will directed, and his ends were attained without question or hinderance. Home was but another quarter of his dominion, and there he exercised his power as fully as in his business, without it ever seeming to occur to him that another mind should here share in the determinations of his own.

Had Mrs. O—— been a woman of more decided character—had her will been stronger—it might

have been much better for both herself and family; for there would have been a reaction upon her husband's imperious temper, that possibly might have led him to reflect, and produced a change. But, as no mirror was held up before him, he could not see himself as he really was, and remained unconscious of his moral deformities. In his family, his will was law. His wife always submitted, no matter how much was sacrificed in the effort; and as his children grew up, they too soon learned their lesson of submission. No matter what was to be done, his inclinations, feelings, or preferences governed the mode and the time. If his wife expressed a wish for any thing, his assent or objection was decisive, and its ground always lay in his own views or feelings. The process of setting himself aside, and acting from a desire to gratify or make another happy, was one of which he had no conception.

Life, thus passed, could have but few charms for a woman whose feelings were as delicately strung as those of Mrs. O——; nor could life, under such a pressure, be a long continued one. It is not, therefore, a matter of wonder that she died early. This event was probably hastened by the circumstances attending the marriage of her youngest daughter, Laura, whose whole character bore a strong resemblance to that of her mother. Florence, the oldest of her two daughters, was like her father, and had, from a child up, domineered over her sweet-tempered, too-yielding sister. As it is to the unhappy marriage of Laura that I wish particularly to refer, I will introduce at once the circumstances attending it.

Mr. O—— was an Englishman. He came to America when a young man, without property or friends, and by his own activity and energy elevated himself to wealth and social eminence. In his own country, he had been taught a servile deference to rank. When he came to this, and sought for employment, he went with his hat under his arm, and cringed meanly to the man of whom he asked a situation. It was not long before he saw that, in the United States, wealth was a thing to be obtained by every one who had shrewdness, industry, and energy; and he also saw that the aristocracy of the country was one of wealth—that money made the lord.

Consequently, as from a combination of fortunate circumstances he began to amass wealth, he began to be impressed with an idea of his own importance, and to grow insolent and overbearing to all around him, except the rich. Time went on, and he became an aristocrat—a money aristocrat—and society accorded to him the distinction. A poor man, in his eyes, was flesh and blood, and that was about all; he was a human being, but of an inferior grade. So much for the man.

When Laura, his youngest daughter, was eighteen, her hand was sought in marriage by the profligate son of a wealthy mercantile friend named Ruffin. The pure-minded girl shrunk, instinctively, from the young man's addresses. She knew nothing of his character, but his face and manners had in them something that repulsed her. When he offered her his hand, she promptly, and without consultation

with any one, rejected the offer. In this she acted with more than her usual decision.

Surprised, mortified, and indignant at this unlooked-for result, Charles Ruffin, in a spirit of revenge, vowed that she should marry him—that he would never give up his suit until he had gained it.

On the evening of the day succeeding that upon which he had received a rejection of his suit, young Ruffin called upon a friend about his own age, with whom he was on terms of the closest intimacy. To him he related, with strong marks of indignant feeling, the particulars of what had transpired; and concluded by saying that he would marry her in spite of all opposition.

"No woman shall ever have the pleasure of rejecting my suit twice," replied the friend, with a slight curl of the lip.

"No woman *shall* ever reject *my* suit," said Ruffin, passionately.

"But you have already been rejected"

"That is to be seen."

"I judge from your own statement."

"I'll have another to make before long, and then you will see whether I have been rejected or not."

The young man laughed aloud as he shook his head and said:—

"It won't do, Charley. You have had the mitten and no mistake. I did not believe the girl had so much spirit in her."

Ruffin felt too deeply chagrined to relish this bantering spirit of his friend. He spoke bitterly in reply:—

"'I am not going to give up this matter," said he

— "not that I care two pins for the huzzy, but I never will forgive the insulting spirit in which my honourable proposal was met. She shall yet repent it."

"Surely you would not marry a woman in order to be revenged on her?" said the friend.

"You will see. Before six months pass, she will be my wife."

"And then——?"

"Yes, and then! Ah——!" and the wretch ground his teeth with a kind of savage delight—"And then Laura O—— will repent——"

"You could not be guilty of conduct so cruel and base," said the friend, showing his honest indignation both in word, tone, and expression of countenance.

"Did I hear you aright?" asked Ruffin, speaking in a louder and more excited voice, and looking with surprise and anger into his companion's face.

"I do not know," was the calm reply. "I tried to utter my words distinctly."

"Did you say *base?*"

"I used that word."

"In application to my conduct?" A scowl was on the brow of Ruffin. His friend looked steadily at him, and replied:

"To your *proposed* conduct, which I pronounce unworthy of you or any man of honour."

The only answer made to this by Ruffin, was to strike his friend in the face. Nothing short of a hostile meeting could result from this quarrel. Such a meeting did take place, and the generous, high-

minded P—— was shot dead on the spot. The sensation produced in the community by this event was strong. A hundred vague rumours as to the cause circulated in all directions, but only a very few were aware of the real circumstances. Ruffin was the challenged party, and this created some feeling in his favour. I am not sure that Laura O—— had even a remote idea of the nature of the dispute from which such fatal consequences had arisen.

No change whatever took place in the social position of Charles Ruffin. He was received as freely in all circles as before. Young ladies greeted him with smiles and pleasant words, and even permitted his hand, wet with the blood of his friend, to touch their own. I went, occasionally, into company at this period, and particularly noticed the manner in which Ruffin was received after his meeting with his friend, as compared with what it was before. The difference, I thought, marked. There was much more attention shown to him. He was treated with that kind of deference usually manifested toward those who have done their fellows some eminent service.

All this grieved and disgusted me. I could not and did not treat him as I had previously done. My manner was cold and formal. He may or may not have observed this. I thought he did; but that was of no consequence.

How little does society do, by common consent, to purify its moral atmosphere! A man's real character is rarely set off against his wealth or family; and so long as this is the case, virtue has no com-

mon protector. If a man's character gave him entrance into, or excluded him from good society, there might be safety for the young, the pure, and the innocent, within its folds. This is not the case; and therefore I care not how tender may have been a parent's solicitude for his child, or how anxious he may have been for her good, the chances for her making shipwreck of happiness are fearful in number.

The remedy for this lies in the adoption of a new code of social laws, founded in a just regard for the well-being of the whole; a code that shall make virtue, and only virtue, the passport to good society.

In what Charles Ruffin had said, he was in earnest. The fatal consequences of a quarrel with his friend for having censured his proposed course of action, did not divert him from his purpose. He was an evil-minded young man, in whom pride and self-love, long indulged, had almost foreclosed every virtuous sentiment, and destroyed every virtuous emotion.

He did not meet Laura O—— for some weeks after her rejection of his suit. During that time the duel had taken place. Laura had no suspicion of the real cause; but the fact increased the repugnance already felt toward Ruffin, and made her regard him with a feeling allied to horror. When he approached her one evening in company, at the house of a friend, her spirit shrunk from him with loathing and fear. His quick eye perceived this, and it only made him resolve more deeply that he would gain her hand in marriage at any cost. Concealing every thing under a calm exterior, he sat

down by her side. She was polite, but cold. She answered all his remarks but briefly, and strove in every way to make the conversation so burdensome to him that he would abandon it, and seek some more agreeable companion.

But he did not seem to notice her reserve, and adroitly managed the conversation, so that little above an assenting monosyllable was required of her, and that only an occasional one.

"He can certainly make himself agreeable enough," she remarked to herself, when, after sitting by her side for half an hour, he said, as he arose and left her—

"But I forget that I must not monopolize all your time in this pleasant company."

"Pity that under such an attractive exterior is concealed so bad a heart as he must have, who could, under any provocation, shoot his friend."

Laura sighed, and shuddered inwardly, as this thought passed through her mind.

For some months the young man continued his efforts to make a more favourable impression upon Laura's mind; but he saw little to encourage him. The maiden had an inward repugnance, that nothing could conquer. Her manner was always reserved in his presence; he never could draw her out into a conversation. She would answer the remarks he made with politeness, but never sought to prolong the interest on any subject he introduced.

At length Ruffin's patience gave way, and he resolved on a more decided movement; and that was to gain over the father to his side. He knew something of his strong will and arbitrary disposition;

and felt sure, that if he became decidedly in favour of the marriage, Laura would be forced to submit. In order to accomplish this, it was necessary to make some sacrifices. The father of Ruffin was a merchant, and an old and intimate friend of Mr. O——. He had long wished his son to settle himself steadily down to business, but had not been able to prevail upon him to do so. An offer of a large share in his house had several times been made, but Charles could not be induced to accept of it. He had studied law, and been admitted to the bar; this enabled him to assume the appearance of a professional man, while the purse of his father rendered it unnecessary for him to seek for or even care for business.

One day he entered the old gentleman's counting-room, and, after lingering about for a while, drew him off into a conversation, and dexterously managed to introduce business themes, and then evinced more than usual interest in the subject. The ice of reserve that had for some time existed between the father and son was thawed. Mr. Ruffin led on the conversation to just the point Charles wished it to attain, and then expressed regret that he had not, at the start, chosen mercantile instead of legal pursuits.

"It is not too late yet, Charles," the old man said, promptly.

"I am afraid of it," replied the son.

"Why so?"

"To pursue any calling with success, requires an education in it. The merchant must go through a preparatory course, as well as the lawyer; and

neither can become eminent if not, originally, well grounded in the rudimental science and practical principles of the profession. I know nothing about the general laws that govern trade, and nothing of the means required to be put in operation in order that these laws may work out a profitable result."

"No matter, Charles," said the father, warmly; "I understand them, and will see that they are properly applied, until time and attention give you a practical knowledge of business."

"Do you think I could ever gain it?"

"I know you could!" was emphatically replied.

"I feel more than half inclined to accept of the offer you have so often made me."

"To take a share in my business?"

"Yes, sir."

"Nothing would give me more pleasure. I have built up a house that is now honourably known throughout the mercantile world, and I feel a natural pride in having its high reputation sustained. You bear my name, and can alone sustain it after my death."

"And I will sustain it!" said the young man, affecting a generous enthusiasm.

"You take a weight from my mind, Charles," returned the father, with undisguised emotion. "I had began to fear that my long cherished hopes would never be realized."

In a week from this time it was announced, in the newspapers, that Mr. Ruffin had connected his son with him in business, and that the firm hereafter would be Charles Ruffin & Son.

No one congratulated the father on this event more warmly than did his old friend Mr. O——.

"I have been a little afraid of Charles," he said, "but he is safe now; the mercantile sphere will do him good. It will sober his feelings and concentrate his thoughts upon an end. I trust that he will make a prudent and enterprising merchant, and give strength to your house."

"Time will show. He has ability enough, and will pursue whatever he undertakes with ardour"

"And you can guide him to a safe result."

Charles Ruffin settled himself down to business, and appeared to enter into all its details with interest and intelligence, greatly to the delight of his father. As much as it was possible for him to do, he threw himself in the way of Mr. O——, in business matters. It may here be remarked, that the father of Laura had not been informed of her rejection of the young man's suit. The maiden confided the secret to her mother alone, and the mother locked it up in her heart. She knew her husband's character too well, and had suffered too much from his disregard to her tenderest and best feelings, to trust her daughter's happiness in his hands.

About two months after he had entered into business with his father, young Ruffin renewed his attentions to Laura, and in such a way as to attract the notice of Mr. O——, who was very well pleased to observe it. He also hinted to his father that he had more than a slight preference for the maiden, and dexterously managed to get him to allude to the subject in the presence of Mr. O——. From that time the fate of the sweet girl was sealed. Her

father was delighted at the prospect of such a union, and assured Mr. Ruffin that it was only necessary for Charles to offer Laura his hand.

Never, from the day of her marriage until this time, had Mrs. O—— opposed her husband. Meek submission and patient endurance had been her portion. But the mother was stronger than the woman. The love she bore her child roused her into resistance.

"I am pleased to find that young Charles Ruffin is attached to our Laura," said O—— to his wife, one evening, after they were alone.

Mrs. O—— turned pale and trembled. She felt that a day of deep sorrow had come. If her husband were pleased at the discovery, he would, she knew, demand a marriage, should the young man again offer himself, against all that she or her poor child could urge. The shrinking repugnance felt by Laura would be as dust in the balance against his will. But she could not tamely submit here. She had a mother's duty to perform.

"I do not think Laura would ever be happy as his wife!" she ventured to say.

"Why not, pray?" he asked, in surprise.

"Their characters are altogether different."

"So are yours and mine."

Mrs. O—— did not reply to this: thoughts that she dared not let come into distinct form flitted through her mind.

"I really do not understand what you mean," the husband resumed. "A better match than Charles Ruffin cannot be found for her. His family is unexceptionable. He will inherit a large

property from his father, independent of what he will accumulate in his own right as a partner in the house of Ruffin & Son."

"It will take more than all that to make Laura happy."

"What more, pray?"

"A man whom she can respect and love."

"What is to hinder her from both respecting and loving Charles Ruffin?"

"She can never love a man who has stained his hands with the blood of his friend. But, apart from this, she has ever shrunk with an inward, unconquerable dislike from this young man."

"Indeed!"

"It is true. Months ago he offered her his hand, which she declined without consulting any one."

"Laura did?"

"Yes."

"And you knew it?"

"After his suit had been declined."

"Why, pray, was I not informed of this?" Mr. O—— spoke in an imperious tone.

"It would have done no good. Laura is of age, and must decide for herself in a matter of this kind. *She* has all to gain or lose."

"But why was it concealed from me? I cannot understand the reason."

Mrs. O—— felt embarrassed. To speak out boldly and avow her belief that he would have acted arbitrarily on the occasion, she could not do. After a few moments' silence, she replied—

"I was afraid you might not approve of what she

had done, and the poor child's mind was already strongly agitated."

"Humph! Approve? No, I should not have approved. If a drayman had offered himself, the same kind of reasoning would have done to excuse her acceptance of him, and marriage without my knowledge. I am surprised beyond measure at your conduct. I ought to have known this at the time."

"It would have done no good."

"Don't say that again!" Mr. O—— returned, in a passionate tone of voice.

The eyes of Mrs. O—— sunk to the floor. She laid her hands meekly together, and sat silent. But her heart was strong in its determination to oppose to the last every attempt made to coerce Laura into a marriage with Ruffin. Mr. O—— talked a great deal, and made many threats and assertions: but to none of them did his wife reply.

"Can't you speak!" he at length exclaimed, losing all control over himself. Never before had he spoken thus to her—never before had he exhibited toward her such a temper. But, never before had she set herself in such direct opposition to him.

The eyes of Mrs. O—— were lifted timidly to her husband's face for a moment, while a tremor ran through her frame. Then she let them fall again to the floor, and sat, still silent.

"The girl *shall* marry him," said O——

"Not with my consent," replied his wife, in a husky, but decided voice

"Woman, are you mad?" exclaimed her husband, again thrown off his guard.

"I don't know what I may have been for the last twenty years of my life, but I am sane now," was calmly returned. "I love my child too well to consent to her sacrifice. I am a mother!"

Accustomed to an entire submission of his wife's will to his own, this unexpected opposition and firmness on her part, while it was unaccountable, chafed his temper almost beyond endurance; and yet astonishment produced a state of calmness. He said no more at that time, but he resolved that Laura should marry Charles Ruffin. He had promised the father as much, and he meant to keep his promise, in spite of all objections and opposition.

As soon as the young man learned the favourable light in which Mr. O—— viewed the matter, his mind was at rest on the subject. He no longer approached Laura with doubt and caution, but boldly preferred his suit again, and was again as promptly rejected. This was communicated to old Mr. Ruffin on the next morning, and he called on Laura's father immediately, and informed him of what had occurred.

"It is a mere whim of the girl's," Mr. O—— replied. "I will see her, and satisfy her that she has done a very foolish thing. Charles must renew his attentions. I have set my heart upon this marriage, and cannot think of its being prevented."

In an hour afterward he entered his dwelling, and found Laura sitting in one of the parlours alone. She looked up at her father, with a timid, frighten-

ed air, for she had reason to believe that his return home at an unusual hour had something to do with her second rejection of Ruffin's suit.

Controlling his feelings as far as it was possible for him to do so, Mr. O—— took a seat beside his daughter, and in a milder and more persuasive tone than he was accustomed to speak in, said:—

"Laura, my dear, what are your reasons for declining so advantageous an offer as the one made you by Charles Ruffin?"

The maiden answered only by a gush of tears. Mr. O—— waited until the strength of his daughter's emotion had subsided. He then resumed—

"I have set my heart upon seeing a union take place between you and the son of my old friend, and it would grieve me deeply were I to be disappointed. You certainly cannot have any very strong objections to Charles? Why, then, do you decline the offer of his hand?"

"Father," replied Laura, looking steadily into his face, and speaking with surprising calmness, "I do not think of death with fear, but my spirit shrinks and shudders at the idea of becoming united to Charles Ruffin. Is not the blood of poor P—— upon his hands?"

"And is that your only objection?"

"No, sir. I can never love him, and I prefer death to marrying a man I do not love."

"So much for a girl's silly romance!" the father sneeringly replied, beginning to lose his self-command. "I wonder who put all this nonsense into your head?"

Laura remained silent

"If you will only try and lay aside your foolish prejudice against one in every way worthy of your highest regard," said Mr. O——, changing his manner again, and speaking in a low, insinuating voice — "and consent to a union we all so much desire, there is nothing I will not do for you. Whatever money can procure, you can command. I know you will be happy. What can prevent it?"

"I am happy here, father," she replied, with a quivering lip. "Why do you wish to push me out like a young bird, but half-fledged, from its nest? My wings are yet too weak to bear me up. Father! if you love me, let me stay where I am, and remain what I am!"

"You cannot always remain at home, Laura. You will become a wife, and form the centre of a new home."

"There is time enough for that, if it take place at all, these five years. I am but a child at best, and still wish to shrink beneath the shelter of my mother's wing."

O—— was unmoved by this tender appeal.

"Consider——" he began.

"I can consider nothing," said Laura, interrupting him, with something of indignation in her voice, "that unites my name with that of Charles Ruffin. A marriage between us is impossible!"

This broke down all reserve and restraint.

"Girl! You shall marry him!" passionately exclaimed the father.

Mrs. O—— entered at the moment, and heard in grief and surprise the last words uttered by her husband.

"Oh, do not rashly say that!" she cried out in a voice of anguish. "You must not, you cannot, you dare not sacrifice your child."

"I have said the word, and, so help me heaven! that word shall be fulfilled to the letter. Laura shall become the wife of Charles Ruffin."

"If you *command* me, father, I have only one thing to do," said the trembling child, her face pale as ashes.

"And pray what is that?" he asked.

"*To obey*," was briefly replied.

"You *shall obey!*" angrily returned Mr. O——; and, rising from his chair, he left the room and the house.

The moment the door closed after him, Laura threw herself, weeping, upon her mother's bosom. Mrs. O—— had no word of comfort to offer, no word of advice to give. All she could do was to weep with her child.

In a few days, the suit of Ruffin was again renewed. As a last hope, Laura appealed to his generosity as a man not to urge her into a marriage that would make her whole life miserable. But the appeal was vain.

As long as the time of the sacrifice could be put off, it was put off. But it was made at last. It is hard to tell which suffered most, the mother or her child, during the few short months that elapsed before the consummation took place from which both shrunk with something like horror. The appearance and manner of the bride occasioned a good deal of remark. It was known that she had twice refused the hand of Ruffin, and it was also pretty

generally believed that the marriage only took place in obedience to the father's wishes. No tears were shed by Laura; but her mother wept as if her heart were breaking—and it was breaking. Laura was exceedingly pale, when she came in by the side of the man to whom she was about making false vows. Her lips were strongly compressed—her eyes looked inward—she seemed like one about to commit an act from which every impulse of nature shrunk. Mr. O—— observed all this with a stern expression on his face, yet with an unbending determination to let the sacrifice be made. Charles Ruffin was fully conscious of the part he was playing, and of the impression made. For a moment he felt abashed, but the recollection of something reassured him, and he did not hesitate.

When Laura, at last, made the almost inaudible response that sealed her fate, her mother sank insensible to the floor. That overtasked heart could bear up no longer. Its cup was full.

It was a sad marriage-festival. Mrs. O—— did not recover during the evening, and Laura could not be forced from the chamber where her mother lay in a slumber that looked like death. When too late, Charles Ruffin saw that he had pursued his mean spirit of revenge too far; that a reaction was about taking place, which would punish him severely.

The large and brilliant company, that had assembled to grace a marriage-festival, returned early, with grave looks and oppressed feelings, and Mr. O—— and his new son-in-law were left alone in the richly decorated but now deserted drawing-rooms.

What their feelings were, it is hard to tell. Few words passed between them.

The young husband did not see his bride again that night. She could not be forced from the bedside of her mother, in whom few signs of returning animation were apparent for many hours.

Morning dawned before the life-current again flowed freely through the mother's veins. When reason returned, she begged to be left alone with Laura, and the boon was granted. For a long time the mother and child lay in each other's arms, and wept together. Then the former essayed to discharge what she believed to be her last duty to the wronged spirit that was just entering upon a life of trial and suffering.

"How shall I counsel you, my dear child?" she said, endeavouring to speak with calmness—"how shall I prepare you for the new, peculiar, and deeply trying relations on which you are about to enter? If I could have prevented your marriage with a man you say you do not love, I would have done so; but now you are a wedded wife, you have taken holy vows upon yourself—a wife's duties you must endeavour to perform—to a wife's vows you must be faithful, even until death. I trust that your husband is sincerely attached to you, and that you will not find it so hard as you have feared, to return something of the regard he professes for you. It may be in your power to influence him for good, to modify and elevate his whole character; to make him, what you have not deemed him, worthy of your love. Oh! how sincerely do I pray that this may be the case; that the cup, now so bitter to the taste, may become

sweetened as life advances. Such things have often occurred—why not in your case? Lay your hand upon your heart, my child, and keep down all feelings of repugnance; let your whole demeanour toward the man you have promised to love become changed; meet him to-day with a gentle bearing, and let his voice, if it come to your ear in words of endearment, find its way into some chamber of your heart: it will be better, far better; I know—I know it will! He cannot but have some true love for you. Why else has he sought your hand? Love begetteth love. May it be so in this case!"

The words of the mother sunk into the heart of her child. A dim light glimmered through the darkness in which her spirit had been enveloped. She saw that she had a duty to perform, and she nerved herself to perform it. She had taken upon herself a wife's vows, and she must not now shrink from the tasks they imposed upon her.

After what we have recorded, and much more to the same purpose had been urged by the mother, she sunk away into a quiet sleep. For the first time since she followed her parent's insensible form from the bridal-hall, Laura left the chamber where she had retired. She had not seen her husband since the hour when the minister, in a solemn voice, pronounced them man and wife; and the thought of meeting him made her tremble. But she nerved herself under a newly awakened sense of duty. As she stepped into one of the parlours—the same in which the nuptial ceremony had taken place—she saw him sitting by a window, with his head leaning on his hand, in an attitude of thought, and, what

seemed to her, dejection. She was touched by this, and a single emotion of tenderness swelled in her heart. He arose to his feet as she entered, and advanced a few steps to meet her. She held out her hand and he grasped it with warmth, and made earnest inquiries after her mother. These she answered, and then came a silence that both found it hard to break. They were in a false position, and were too clearly conscious of the fact. Casual and indifferent remarks would be out of place; and neither dared speak the thoughts nearest the heart.

Ah! are not these perversions of the marriage state sad to think of? All evil is the perversion of some good: the higher the good, therefore, the more direful in consequence is the perversion. Marriage is the highest and holiest social state into which man is capable of entering; if entered into from right motives, it induces a state of felicity beyond what any other relation can give; if from wrong motives, it will become a condition of wretchedness beyond conception. We may pity the weakness that led Laura O—— to consent to this unnatural union in obedience to the will of her father, but cannot in any way commend the act. She had no more right to obey in this thing than he had to command; in obeying she was deeply culpable. Too many consequences hung upon her free decision of a matter of such intrinsic importance. After a child has obtained the age of rationality and freedom, and becomes responsible to society and to God for every act, the father who attempts control in a matter like this commits sin; and the child who

submits to and becomes a passive subject of such control, also commits sin.

The true relation of parents to children, is one in which all do not exercise sufficient discrimination. It is not generally seen, that the parent is responsible to society and to Heaven for his child's conduct, only until that child is of age and becomes capable of making rational discriminations on matters pertaining to life. After that period, no parent is guiltless who attempts arbitrary control. He has still a duty to perform, but should emulate the bird that teaches its fledgelings the use of their wings in performing it. He should no longer think for them and decide for them, but should guide their reason to sound judgments, and be very careful in doing this not to force the child's mind, but merely to help it to a decision of its own. It is this state of freedom and reason that makes the man. The folly of parents choosing conjugal partners for their children needs not the painful history I am relating to illustrate it. This is a folly, thank Heaven! that is reforming itself under the influence of increasing moral light and freedom. Its opposite, or a carelessness as to whom the choice might rest upon, has prevailed already to too great an extent.

The embarrassed position of the young couple was relieved by the entrance of Mr. O——. He had, naturally, a good share of tact and self-possession, and this enabled him to introduce subjects of conversation that were calculated to lead their minds away from the present, and to make them feel more at ease. Laura, acting from a newly awakened sense of duty, strove to appear cheerful; and her

husband, glad to be relieved from a situation by no means agreeable, endeavoured to seem as cheerful as she. But it was force-work on both sides, and apparent to both.

Thus began the married life of Charles Ruffin and his beautiful bride. The promise was not fair, and the result did not belie the promise. Many weeks did not pass before the heart of her husband was laid bare to Laura; the sight filled her with horror and despair. The native malignancy of the man could not long be concealed—the end for which he had sought her hand no duplicity could conceal, no acting disguise. It must come forth—and it did come forth.

The meek patience of the pure-minded woman he had wronged, the unwearying efforts she made to act from duty, if not from love, irritated him, for it was a rebuke that he could not well bear. The forced warmth of manner, which he had assumed at first, gave place in a little while to indifference. To this succeeded coldness; then followed words harshly spoken; and to these were soon added the taunts of a bitter spirit.

It is difficult to conceive how any man could act so mean, so malignant a part. In fact, no man, unless possessed of an infernal spirit, could so debase his noble nature.

For a short period after the marriage of her daughter, deceived by the appearance of affection that was assumed by both Laura and her husband, Mrs. O——, who had recovered in a few days from the shock her feelings had sustained on the night of the wedding, became cheerful, and, in some measure,

resigned to an event that had taken place in opposition to all her feelings and wishes. But she did not long remain deceived. She had, herself, suffered too much not to perceive the first indications of positive suffering in her child. From the day she became fully satisfied that Laura's husband had no true affection for her, and that her life would be a burden even more intolerable to bear than had been her own, she began to droop in spirits, and steadily declined from that hour until life closed up with her its troubled history. This mournful event took place about two years after Laura's marriage. Long before its occurrence, Charles Ruffin's conduct toward his wife had become brutal. Having attained his end, the natural baseness of his character soon led him to throw off all disguise. The first indications were seen in his indifference to business. But few weeks elapsed before his long period of absence from the counting-room, and his want of interest in the operations of the house while there, attracted the notice of his father. As this defection increased day after day, old Mr. Ruffin felt it to be his duty to remonstrate. He did so as gently as was in his power. This produced, what the young man desired, a rupture, and he withdrew from the new firm immediately.

A wife's relation, no matter how uncongenial it may be, involves a certain degree of affection for and interest in a husband. In a little while Laura began to lean toward Charles Ruffin, and her heart began to take hold of and cling to him as the vine clings to the statelier tree that supports it. In his absence, she experienced a want of something, and

involuntarily looked for the hour of his return with pleasure. And yet she found little satisfaction in his presence, always experiencing a strong internal repulsion. His first direct expression of unkindness—the first laying off of his mask—took place at the time the rupture with his father occurred. He came home, soured and disturbed in mind, and, in a captious spirit and fretful tone, told Laura what had happened, adding, with emphasis—

"And I am glad of it!"

"O Charles! Don't say so!—don't speak in that way!" exclaimed Laura, without reflection.

Opposition of any kind, no matter how trivial, Ruffin never could bear; it fevered his whole system in an instant.

"Why not, madam, pray?" he replied, drawing himself up in an imperious manner, and looking sternly at poor Laura, into whose eyes the tears instantly gushed. There was no reply.

"Why not, ha?" repeated the husband. "Am I not a free man, to do as I please? Do you think I am going to confine myself to a dirty store? If any one does, he is mistaken."

To this Laura had not a word to answer. His manner had completely paralyzed her. He could not have hurt her more, had he struck her to the earth.

From that time hope, which had begun to spring up in the heart of Laura, died. She saw, beneath the thin exterior of her husband's assumed character, enough of the real qualities of his mind, to rob her of all the desires of life.

It would not be well to consume the reader's

time by tracing, step by step, the life-progress of this unhappy couple. Enough, that each passing month and year only widened the breach that Charles had made. For his wife he had no love, and did not attempt even to assume a virtue he did not possess. He was cold toward her, and neglected her shamefully; and led, besides, a most abandoned and dissolute life, thus wounding her spirit more vitally.

The birth of a child gave her something to love —a boon for which she was deeply thankful. She could not have survived her mother's death, which took place a few months afterward, had not this object of affection been given.

A year after her child was born, her husband's conduct became so outrageous, that her father took her home, and forbade the young man from ever crossing his threshold. In stern, unrelenting purpose, Mr. O—— was fully a match for Charles Ruffin, and had, what he did not possess, a weight of years and character to sustain him.

Many months did not elapse before, in a spirit of revenge, an effort was made by Ruffin to see his wife, and induce her to leave her father's protection, and live with him again.

Laura was sitting, one day, alone in her room, with her babe in her arms, when she heard a man's step behind her. She turned quickly, in affright, to see who had entered. It was her husband!

"How are you, Laura?" he said, in a mild, insinuating voice, advancing toward his wife, and extending his hand.

Surprise and agitation prevented Mrs. Ruffin from

either rising or speaking. Her husband took her hand, and pressed it within his own; but there was no returning pressure. The power of action was gone.

"Laura, why don't you to speak to me? Am I not your husband?" This was said in a tone of affected sadness.

"O Charles! why have you come here to trouble me?" said Mrs. Ruffin, as soon as she could utter a word. "You do not love me—you never have loved me. I am in quiet here, if not in peace—leave me then as I am."

"Laura, you wrong me," urged the young man; "I do love you; I have always loved you. An unhappy temper may often have led me into error; but still I feel for you a sincere affection. Separated from you, I am miserable. Will you not"—

At this moment, the sound of horse's feet came thundering up the broad avenue that led to the house. Ruffin glanced from the window, and then glided from the room without uttering a word. Laura was thrilled by a sudden fear; she could not rise nor scream, but sat as if nailed to her chair, awaiting some fearful issue. From this paralyzed state, the quick, sharp crack of a pistol, just under the window where she sat, aroused her, and she sprang forward with a cry of agony.

About half an hour previous to this time, a friend entered the office of the insurance company of which Mr. O—— was president, and hurriedly communicated to him his suspicion that his son-in-law had gone out to visit his daughter; with what intent he had no means of knowing. In five minutes after,

Mr. O—— was mounted upon a swift horse, and galloping out of the city in the direction of his country-seat. He had a loaded pistol in his pocket, and his firm resolution was to shoot Ruffin, if he found him anywhere upon his premises. As he rode, with a furious gait, up to his house, and was about checking his horse to dismount, his eye caught the form of a man, hurrying down stairs, and seeking egress through a back door. He doubted not that it was his son-in-law, and, firm in his purpose, he drew his pistol and fired. Happily for the young man, the motion of the horse, upon which Mr. O—— rode, interfered with his aim. The ball glanced close to his ear, and passed on harmlessly. Springing from the reeking animal upon which he had ridden with such hot haste, the excited father dashed through the hall, and sought to overtake the fugitive. But Ruffin had no wish to meet Mr. O—— under such circumstances, and managed to elude him entirely.

Finding his pursuit vain, Mr. O—— returned, and hurried up to his daughter's room. He found her upon the floor, insensible; and her child, that she had been able to protect in her fall, lying asleep, and drawn tightly to her bosom. The sight touched him deeply, and brought back upon his mind rebuking thoughts. It was his own handiwork he saw before him. He had forced his child into an uncongenial union, and now had no power to restore peace to the heart he had so cruelly wronged.

Domestics were instantly called in; or, rather, had already crowded into the apartment, alarmed by the hurried arrival of their master and the noise

of his pistol. They had seen no one enter nor leave the house, and could not conjecture the cause of what had passed so hurriedly. The first impression produced upon their minds was, that Mr. O—— had shot his daughter. This variously affected them. Some fled to remote parts of the house in terror, while one or two came forward and assisted the father to lift his child from the floor and place her upon a bed. The gardener, who was rushing into the house, having been alarmed by the report of the pistol, was met in the hall by the cook, whose starting eyes and quivering lips told a tale of horror.

"What's the matter? What's the matter?" the man inquired eagerly.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" sobbed the cook—the effort to speak bringing a flood of tears—"Massa O—— shot poor Miss Laura, and killed her dead."

The gardener stayed to hear no more, but turned away and fled from the house, spreading alarm in every direction. He paused not until he had reached the city, where he gave information to a magistrate, who issued a warrant for the arrest of Mr. O——, and placed it in the hands of an officer.

The fainting fit of Mrs. Ruffin was of but short duration. She opened her eyes after the lapse of fifteen or twenty minutes. The presence of her father bewildered her mind. She remembered, with painful distinctness, the visit of her husband, the hurried sound of a horse's feet, and the discharge of a pistol. From that moment all was blank. But there was a vail of horror over her mind. The look of anxious inquiry she cast upon her father constrained him to say—

"No one has been harmed. I only came home to protect you from outrage."

"Was it you who rode up the avenue so hurriedly?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Did he?"—she could not finish the sentence, but what she wished to say was understood. Mr. O—— was silent.

"He did not attempt to harm you, father? Oh, no! He could not do that—I am sure he could not. He is passionate, and has many faults, but *that* he could not do."

With some reluctance, Mr. O—— admitted that he had attempted to shoot Ruffin. Laura shuddered and closed her eyes. Almost as suddenly as if a hand had been laid upon her heart did its pulsations cease; but in a little while they were renewed, and the current of life went on again in its circle.

As soon as Mr. O—— could leave the chamber of Laura, he did so. He descended to the hall, and was approaching the front door of the house, when three men, with severe and resolute faces, entered. One of them stepped forward, saying, as he did so, "I arrest you in the name of," &c., and placed his hand upon the shoulder of O——. In an instant, the officer lay upon the floor, and, in an instant after, the arms of Mr. O—— were pinioned by the two assistants, and he hurried out of the house and thrust into a carriage, which was driven off at full speed for the city.

For some time, astonishment kept Mr. O—— dumb. His mind sought in vain for an explanation of this outrage upon his person. What could it

mean? The whole thing was inexplicable. As soon as he could control himself to speak, he turned to the officers who had arrested him, and said—

"May I ask what all this means? Why am I dragged from my house like a felon or murderer?"

"You are accused of murder."

"Me?" in a voice of astonishment.

"Yes; of the murder of your daughter?"

"By whom?"

"By a man who says he is your gardener."

"Indeed! Perhaps you had better turn back and see whether my daughter be alive or dead." This was spoken with bitter irony. The officer merely replied—

"My duty is to take your person before a magistrate; not to investigate the charges against you."

O—— sunk back in the carriage, silent, but deeply indignant at the outrage he had received. On arriving at the magistrate's office, he found his gardener there, looking pale and frightened. The poor fellow believed, solemnly, that what the cook had told him was true. When called upon to give his testimony, he had only the fact of hearing the pistol discharged and the cook's affirmation to sustain the allegation he had made, and upon which the warrant for arrest had been issued.

"We must summon the cook," said the magistrate, beginning to fill up a summons.

"I would advise you, to make sure of getting at the truth, to summon my daughter," said Mr. O——, bitterly. "She could testify to the fact of being shot, or shot at, more clearly than any one else."

The magistrate looked at the prisoner with sur-

prise, for a moment, and then proceeded to fill up the summons and despatch it. The distance was full three miles, and an hour and a half elapsed before the cook was brought in, looking half frightened to death. Ocular demonstration had fully convinced her that "Miss Laura" was not murdered, and she had it from her own lips that she had not even been shot at. Her evidence settled the matter, and Mr. O—— was released from custody, with many apologies and expressions of regret that such a mistake had occurred.

While the investigation at the magistrate's was going on, Rumour, with her hundred tongues, spread the news through the city that a horrible murder had taken place. I heard it with a thrill of horror, for it came in such a shape that I could not help believing it. No cause for the dreadful deed was alleged, for none could be imagined. I shall never forget my feelings on the next day, when, in passing along the street, I met O—— walking, with his usual firm step and erect head, quietly along the pave. No contradiction of the rumours of the preceding evening had reached my ears, and I, therefore, still believed him to be the murderer of his child. The sensation I experienced, I cannot describe.

When the real cause of all this mortifying exposure and false accusation became known, the feeling against Charles Ruffin was very strong—and he felt strongly, too. Toward the father of Laura, he indulged a murderous hate, and vowed to be deeply revenged. How he sought this revenge will be seen.

Time rolled on, and the excitement and gossip occasioned by the events we have mentioned, died

entirely away, and the circumstances attending them were forgotten, except by a few, in whose memories such incidents are always kept alive. The child of Laura had grown to a sweet little girl, five years of age, and was the strong cord that bound her mother to life. In the few years that had elapsed since the death of his wife, Mr. O—— had grown old rapidly. His tall, erect form had acquired a slight stoop; his hair had lost its jetty blackness; he walked with a slower and more careful gait. In the vigour of early manhood, and even in its staid and firm maturity, he had never loved any thing so well as himself—had loved, sincerely, nothing out of himself. But his infant grandchild had won upon his tenderest feelings; had entwined herself with every fibre of his heart. He never tired of her sweet prattle—when at home, she was ever by his side, or in his arms, and, while away, she was ever in his thoughts.

The husband of Laura, since his first attempt to see her, had made no overt act that looked to the same end. For a greater part of the time he had been away from Baltimore, residing in one of the West India islands.

Thus matters stood, when Mr. O—— was startled, and his daughter terrified, by the institution of a suit on behalf of Charles Ruffin, for the possession of his infant daughter. The effect upon the mind of Mrs. Ruffin was so serious, that medical advice was deemed necessary, and I was called in to see her, as intimated in the beginning of this history. It was my first visit to the family.

I was preparing to go out, one afternoon, when Mr. O—— himself entered my office. We were not

personally acquainted, though each of us knew the other very well by reputation. He looked agitated, yet evidently was striving to appear calm.

"Are you very much engaged, this afternoon, doctor?" he said, as he took my hand.

"I have several calls to make," I replied. "But if there is any pressing need of my attendance in another quarter, I shall feel myself bound to go."

"I wish you to see my daughter," Mr. O—— said. "She is in a very unhappy state of mind. I don't know that medicine can do her any good. Still I would like you to see her."

"What is the nature of the affection under which she is suffering?" I asked.

Mr. O—— looked thoughtful for some moments, and then said—

"A disease of the mind, doctor, beyond the reach of your skill, I fear."

He then related, briefly, some of the facts connected with her unhappy marriage, and concluded by saying that the effect upon her mind, of the suit which her husband had instituted for the recovery of his child, was of a most distressing and alarming character, causing him to tremble for her reason.

"I do not think there is any cause for her being so much alarmed," I remarked. "Her husband cannot get possession of the child by any legal process."

"I wish I only felt sure of that, doctor," was replied, mournfully. "But I do not. By the law which governs in these cases, the father has a right to claim his offspring. For years, I have dreaded just what has at last happened. I knew too well

the vindictive spirit of Charles Ruffin, to hope, except for a brief time, that he would fail to stab us in this tender place. My fears I never breathed to my unhappy child—and she had no thought of danger like this. The announcement of the fact that a suit had been commenced, fell upon her as unexpectedly as a bolt from a summer sky, and has completely prostrated her. Since the whole truth burst upon her, and her mind fully apprehended the danger that threatened, she has confined herself, with our dear little Ella, in her room, and will admit no one but myself and the nurse. If I urge the necessity of taking the child out, that it may breathe the fresh air in the garden or upon the lawn, she answers me only with tears. If I attempt to take the child from the room against her wish, she seizes hold of it frantically, and utters such cries of anguish that I am forced to desist. It is now ten days since either she or the dear little one has left her chamber, and the health of both are beginning to suffer. The child is pining to get out, but her mother will not let her go."

Then uttering a bitter imprecation upon the author of all this misery, he turned quickly and said:

"But come, doctor, my carriage is at the door. You must see her yourself; perhaps you may be able to do something."

I was not very sanguine of this. I had no acquaintance with Mrs. Ruffin, and did not believe that in her state of mind, if truly described, she would give any confidence to a stranger. I suggested this, but Mr. O——- thought differently, and

I did not care to anticipate difficulties; besides, he had mentioned that the child seemed feverish and needed some attention.

On arriving at the house and going to the door of Mrs. Ruffin's room, we found it locked.

"It is always so," said Mr. O——, as he tapped lightly against it.

"Who's there?" I heard asked, in a low voice.

"Open the door, Laura. It is I," her father replied.

The door was half opened, and held tightly until Mr. O—— crowded in, and then it was shut with a sudden jar, leaving me upon the outside. I remained where I was for the space of about five minutes. I could hear the sound of voices within, sometimes loud and excited, and sometimes low and pleading. I could also hear occasional sobs. At the expiration of this time, Mr. O—— came out, as before crowding through a small aperture of the door.

"She has at last consented to see you, doctor," he said. "I gained my end only by assuming that Ellen was very ill, and must have medical attendance."

"Do you wish me to see her now?" I inquired.

"Yes, she is ready to receive you."

He then tapped at the door again, after he had answered her query of who was there. Mrs. Ruffin partly opened it as before, and we crowded through. The instant we were within she closed the door with an energetic action, double locked and bolted it, and then sprang back to where a little girl was

standing in tears, and caught her wildly up in her arms.

"They want to take her away," she said, lifting her deep blue eyes to mine—"but they can't do it. Nobody shall take my child from me."

"Nobody can take her from you," I said, falling in at once in a familiar way with her mood. "She is yours, and nobody can touch her. Poor child," I added, putting my hand upon her head, "she does not look well. She wants fresh air and exercise."

"I think she is very well, doctor," the mother returned quickly. "I keep the windows open a good deal, and she can play through the room. It is large."

"But this room is not like the green lawn out of doors; nor are the drooping flowers with which these vases are filled, like the fresh blossoms in your beautiful garden. She must have fresh air, madam, and exercise out of doors."

"But the danger, doctor! Think of the danger!" She spoke in a deep whisper, and with a look of love.

"There is no danger, madam. None in the world."

"Oh, but there is! They are watching all around the house for her, and would snatch her up in a moment. Isn't it dreadful!"

The poor creature shuddered from head to foot.

"It would be dreadful if this were the case, but I can assure you it is not, madam. Now, that a suit has been commenced, all parties will wait for its termination. If there had been any wish on the part of any one to obtain forcible possession of your

child, no suit would have been instituted. There have been hundreds of opportunities for carrying her off."

But the mother's mind was not accessible to reason. Her fears overshadowed every thing. Nothing that I could urge made any impression upon her.

"You are not afraid to ride out with your father?" I said, after a pause. "The carriage could be shut up closely, and no one would suspect who was in it."

"I wouldn't leave this room with Ella for the world," she replied, in a solemn voice. "You cannot tempt me, doctor."

"Your father is able to protect you and Ella."

"And will protect you with my life," said Mr. O——.

But Mrs. Ruffin shook her head slowly, and drew her child closer to her side.

I was puzzled; and Mr. O—— looked anxious and disturbed. After some moments of hurried reflection, I drew him aside, and said aloud enough for Mrs. Ruffin to hear me,

"Don't you think it would be advisable to leave this place and go away into the country, say forty or fifty miles, where no one would dream of seeking for the child?"

A side glance at Mrs. Ruffin satisfied me that she not only heard every word, but was deeply interested in what I said.

"Let me think," replied the father, understanding me in a moment. And he stood thoughtful for some time.

"Where could we go?" he at length asked.

"Oh! as to that, there are hundreds of secluded little spots, at any one of which concealment would be perfect."

"How would you like that, Laura?" Mr. O—— said, turning and speaking to his daughter.

"Oh, above all things. Let us go far away from here. Not fifty, nor a hundred, but a thousand miles."

"Very well. Then we will go. Any thing for safety. Can you be ready in a week?"

"In a week! Yes, in an hour. Oh! father, let us go instantly. Dear little Ella may be taken from us to-night."

"I do not think there is any danger of that," I urged: "besides, it takes some time to prepare for so long a journey."

"But think of the urgency of the case, doctor; that calls for extraordinary haste. I am ready—or, can be ready in an hour. Let us go to-day."

"It will be impossible, my dear," replied Mr. O——. "We cannot start before to-morrow, at the earliest."

With difficulty we got her reconciled to wait until the next day, and then left her alone to consult upon what was best to be done. The poor child begged and cried to go with her grandfather, but the mother kept fast hold of her. The sight grieved me much.

I talked the matter over with Mr. O—— for an hour. It was finally determined that a pleasant house should be taken, if one could be found, somewhere within five or ten miles of the city, and prepared for the reception of the unhappy mother and

her child. Then a journey of at least a week should be made in the family carriage, at the end of which period, the house selected should be reached, and thus the impression be made upon Mrs. R.'s mind, that she was at least two hundred miles away from Baltimore. In deciding upon this course, numerous difficulties presented themselves, but were finally set aside. The most prominent was, the necessary absence from his daughter and grand-daughter, that would be required on the part of Mr. O——, who had to be in the city every day. If he were to return home every night, the suspicion would at once arise that they could not be two hundred miles from the threatened danger. It was at last determined that he should go to them twice a week, and leave his daughter to infer that he came nearly the whole distance by steamboat.

This was just the extent of my medical services in the case on my first visit. The plan proposed was carried out, and I saw no more of either Mr. O—— or his daughter for nearly three months.

In the mean time, the suit instituted by Ruffin progressed as fast as the nature of the case allowed. The most untiring efforts were made by mutual friends to divert him from his malignant purpose, but his resolution to carry the thing through, remained firm. His father opposed him as strongly as any one; but persuasion and remonstrance were alike unavailing. His only answer was:

"It is my child, and the law will give her to me I did not separate myself from my wife; she left me, and took away my child. She may remain

where she is. I do not care to see her; but my child I *will* have. The law is clear on this head, and I am very willing to await its decision."

At length the day of trial drew near; and much excitement prevailed on the subject. But, as the matter was never alluded to in any of the newspapers—means being taken to prevent this—the knowledge of it was confined to a particular circle. My practice was in this circle. Wherever I went, the theme of conversation was the approaching suit. In not one instance did I hear an expression of sympathy for Ruffin. Every voice was lifted against him, and the statute that would tear from a mother's arms her child, denounced in the severest terms as unjust and in opposition to the very first laws of Nature. But this did not stay the regular progression of events. At length the day arrived, the case was called, and Mr. O—— required to produce the child in court.

From the time of Mrs. Ruffin's removal from the family homestead, up to this period, she had lived in imagined seclusion. But a knowledge of her unhappy state of mind, the ruse that had been practised upon her, and where she was, was known to all her friends, and even widely beyond this circle of true sympathy. The order to bring the child into court, an order upon which Mr. O—— had not at all calculated, created in his mind the most anxious solicitude. It could not be done without endangering the very life of his daughter.

It was at this crisis, that I was again summoned to attend Mrs. Ruffin. Why I was selected, I never could exactly understand. The regular physician

of the family was a man of distinguished professional ability, and a competent adviser. As before, Mr. O—— called upon me at my office. He looked haggard and careworn, and appeared at least five years older than when I last saw him. He stated to me the alarming aspect of affairs, and asked for my advice as a physician, a father, and a man.

"As for me," he said, "I have lost that clear perception of things which I usually possess. I feel bewildered half of my time. I cannot see what it is right for me to do. Sometimes I get so excited, that I am strongly tempted to bring the whole thing to a close by blowing out the brains of that infamous rascal, whose fiend-like persecutions have made my poor child more than half a maniac, and threaten to destroy her life. And after all is said, I believe this is the only horn of the dilemma left. It will kill Laura to take away her daughter; or, worse, entirely unsettle her reason. Is there any doubt as to my right course? I must choose between the death of my child, or the death of her persecutor? And I will choose!"

As Mr. O—— uttered the last sentence, his face grew black with passion, and he turned from me with the air of a man who had fully resolved upon a desperate deed. I laid my hand upon his arm, and said in a firm voice:

"Think again, Mr. O——. Perhaps a better way may be found."

"I have thought of every thing," he replied—"and I see but one course; a dreadful one, I admit; but desperate cases require desperate remedies.

Laura's child shall not be dragged from her arms! I swear it, solemnly, this hour! With my life I will prevent this cruel outrage."

"You will not attempt the murderous deed you have threatened," I said, looking earnestly into the face of Mr. O——.

"But I'll tell you what I will do. I'll guard the asylum of my injured child, and guard it with my life. I shall return home to-night well armed, and, remaining at home, await the issue. If the myrmidoms of the law come to drag our sweet babe away from us, they will do their work only by passing over my dead body. I have formed this instant resolution; and I mean to abide by it."

"Let me suggest a better way," I said, in reply to this.

"There is no better way; but let me hear what you have to propose."

"I will go home with you to-night, and see your daughter. To-morrow we will return, and I will go into court and testify as a physician, that to remove the child will be to destroy either the mother's reason or her life. I will also describe to the court the distressing consequences already attendant upon this unnatural prosecution, and urge every humane consideration in favour of letting the suit go on without further disturbing the unhappy mother."

"That is, you would merely *beg* for justice?"

"Call it what you please. In a case like this the best means are the wisest, and should be adopted by a wise man, without letting his feelings come into the question. You propose to defend your

daughter from this outrage by an appeal to deadly weapons? Very well; suppose you shoot half-a-dozen men, you will be at length overpowered and dragged away, if not killed upon the spot. Do you think this would make Mrs. Ruffin's position any better? You know that it would not. No—no, sir; I have proposed the only safe course, and one that will, I am sure, bring about the result we so much desire."

"Well, if you think it will do any good, I am willing to see the trial made; but I have no faith in the result. It will have to come at last to what I have said."

"I do not think so. For such an alternative I cannot believe there is any necessity."

"There is *law* in this country, doctor, but little *justice*. However, I have agreed to let you manage the thing in your own way—or at least try to manage it. I will wait as patiently as I can for the issue of that trial. You go home with me this afternoon?"

"Yes."

"Can you start at once?"

"I will be ready to go with you in a very few minutes," I replied, and left him for a short time, in order to make a few hurried preparations to attend him.

A rapid drive of an hour and a half brought us to the secluded spot where Mrs. Ruffin imagined she was concealed from the knowledge of every one. As the carriage came up to the door, we found her seated in a garden-chair, on a beautiful lawn in front of the house—her little girl playing near her. She remembered me the moment I alighted from the

carriage, and came forward with my name upon her lips. No smile lit up her pale face as she greeted me; no light sparkled in her eye. I spoke cheerfully to her, but she did not answer in a cheerful voice. When I took her little girl by the hand, a look of alarm gathered upon her face, and she took fast hold of the child's hand. I smiled and said:

"You are not afraid of me?"

She did not make any answer; but I could see from her half-averted face, and whole manner, that she regarded me with suspicion.

"Come, dear," she said to her child, "the dew is beginning to fall; we must go into the house" - and she led her daughter away. The child was reluctant, but passive. As she followed her mother, she looked back frequently, and called out—

"Grandpa, come!"

"Poor child!" said Mr. O——, in a voice of tender regret. "Accursed villain!" he added, with a sudden change of manner and tone. "You shall yet suffer for this"—and he clenched his hand, and ground his teeth in a paroxysm of anger.

"Much depends, my dear sir," I said to him, "on your controlling yourself. Do not let your daughter see that you are excited, for she will attribute all to fear."

"Am I a stock or a stone, doctor? Is it possible for me to look on and be calm? Do you suppose I can mark, day by day, the pale face of my child growing paler, the light in her eye fading, the tone of her voice growing sadder and sadder, and not feel? Look at her, doctor! Do you see no change since your eyes last rested upon her? Is she the

same? I believe her heart is already broken. Ah, sir! This is all hard to bear!"

I felt that it must be. I had already noticed the change to which he referred—a change that indicated the rapid progress of a malady for which I had no remedy.

We followed Mrs. Ruffin into the house. As we entered from the lawn, she went up stairs with her child, who called out earnestly:

"Grandpa, come up! do come, grandpa."

"Go, my dear sir, at once. Do not make any ceremony with me," said I. Mr. O—— took me at my word, and followed his daughter and her child up to her chamber.

I felt troubled at the appearance of things. Poor Mrs. Ruffin had changed more than I had dreamed. Mr. O—— had truly described her appearance; she looked like one whose heart was breaking. Her face was almost colourless, and painful to look upon —it was so very sad.

I remained alone for nearly the space of half an hour. Then both Mrs. Ruffin and her father joined me. Little Ella was asleep. Few and brief were the sentences that were uttered by any of us, until tea was announced. At the table a light, rambling conversation sprung up between Mr. O—— and myself, and relieved the sense of oppression under which we all laboured. As soon as we arose from the table, Mrs. Ruffin retired to join her child.

"Don't you see a great change, doctor?" said Mr. O——, as soon as we were alone.

"Your daughter certainly has changed since I

last saw her," I replied. "But, living as she has lived, is a change to be wondered at?"

"No, doctor, it is not," he replied, bitterly. "But the necessity for living thus is what drives me almost mad. I feel myself growing more and more desperate every day. No consequences, it seems to me, can be more dreadful than those already existing. There must come a change, and that speedily."

As best I could, did I soothe this state of excitement; but I had little or nothing to say in regard to the daughter's physical or mental condition that was at all favourable. I did not see her again that night. On the next morning we met early at the breakfast-table. The child was still asleep. I tried to draw Mrs. Ruffin out into a conversation on some general topic; but this I could not do. Her mind dwelt upon only one subject, and could not be interested in any other. After breakfast, Mr. O—— and myself started for the city.

"Do you believe Laura would survive the removal of her child from her?" he asked me, as we seated ourselves in his carriage.

"I certainly do not," I could but reply.

"Do you believe she could bear its production in court, even if she accompanied it?" he added.

"To attempt to bring it into court would certainly destroy either her reason or her life," I said.

"If she were your child, would you permit a thing to be done that would produce one or both of these direful consequences?"

"Not if I could prevent it."

"No—nor would any father."

"I trust—nay, I am sure, the order of yesterday will be withdrawn, so soon as I make a statement of Mrs. Ruffin's condition.

"It may be—I am not sanguine. But even if it is, the matter is by no means settled. In less than a week, the decision of the court may be adverse."

"Do not anticipate the worst, Mr. O——."

"Ruffin has the law on his side."

"And his wife humanity."

"A feeble hope that. What has humanity to do in a case of law."

"The judges are men."

"But without human feeling."

"I believe differently. Two upon the bench I know to be men of the better sort—men who will lean to the side of humanity, and let their decision be governed by it as far as is possible."

O—— shook his head. "I have no faith in men," he gloomily answered. "I have lived too long in the world."

"I have lived some years in the world, also," I said, "and I *have* some faith in men. Man's better feelings are not all perverted."

O—— still shook his head, and seemed disposed to be silent and indulge his own reflections. Seeing this, I leaned back in the carriage, and was silent also.

At ten o'clock I entered the court-room. It was already well filled. The case had been called on the previous day, and this fact, with the order that immediately followed, to produce the child in court, had sped quickly through the circle of the unhappy mother's friends and their acquaintances. Ladies of

the first families, who had never before seen the inside of a court-room, now filled every bench that could be had, or stood in the open spaces, anxiously waiting for the proceedings to begin. The first person upon whom my eyes rested, as I entered the room, was Charles Ruffin. He sat by the side of his counsel, unabashed, although every eye was upon him, and almost every heart execrating him. He looked steadily at Mr. O——, who came in with me, his eyes not once sinking beneath the withering scowl that settled upon the father's brow.

In the course of ten or fifteen minutes, the proceedings commenced. The first thing was a repetition of the order of the court to produce the child. All eyes turned toward Mr. O——; there was a breathless pause. The counsel for the defence here stated that he wished to produce the testimony of the physician, who had attended Mrs. Ruffin, as to her state of health, and the certain effect that would be produced if the order of the court were carried out. I was then called upon to give the proposed testimony.

In performing this duty, I strove to present as vivid a picture as possible of the unhappy state of the mother's mind. I described all I had seen in the strongest colours, and concluded by saying, that as a physician, I believed, solemnly, that if the order of the court were executed, it would instantly destroy the mother's life.

I do not think there was more than two with unmoistened eyes in the room, when I left the stand—those two were Ruffin and his counsel; the first was unmoved, because malignant passions sustained him

—the latter because he heard all that was related as an opposing counsel; his thoughts kept all emotions quiescent. Even the judges were disturbed, and had great difficulty to rally themselves.

The counsel for the defence was about rising to enforce the evidence I had given, when he was requested by the judges to defer what he was going to say for a few minutes. A brief consultation was held upon the bench, and then one of the associate judges declared the order of the preceding day rescinded. A murmur of satisfaction ran through the crowded room; Mr. O—— was overpowered with emotion. He felt what he had not felt before, that there was a leaning of the court toward the side of humanity.

A few minutes after the court had set aside the order of the previous day, I turned my eyes to that part of the room where I had seen Charles Ruffin seated by the side of his counsel. The lawyer was there, but Ruffin I could nowhere see. A suspicion flashed across my mind.

"Did you see Ruffin go out?" I whispered to Mr. O——

Either my words, or manner, caused him to turn pale.

"No," he replied, glancing hurriedly around. "Has he gone out?"

"I do not see him anywhere in the room. He must have left it."

"Where can he have gone? Why has he left so abruptly at this particular moment?"

"I cannot, certainly, tell," I said.

"I must go home immediately, and you must go

with me, doctor;" and Mr. O—— turned and moved away as he spoke.

"My patients will need attention. I have already been away from them too long," I replied.

"You must go with me, doctor. A case of life and death rules over all others. Come!"

I felt that I dared not refuse to go. Vague suspicions crossed my mind. I followed Mr. O—— out and hurried by his side to the stables where he kept his horses at livery.

"Put Barney and Tom into my light wagon as quickly as possible," said Mr. O——, "and see well to the harness!"

The vehicle was soon ready. Mr. O—— took the reins, and spoke to the horses, large, strong animals, and fleet of foot. They dashed ahead at a noble speed. I do not think we were three quarters of an hour in going a distance of ten miles. Not a word was spoken during the whole ride; and neither of us knew what was in the mind of the other except by conjecture. The house in which Mrs. Ruffin had sought to hide herself from the search of her cruel persecutor, was situated a short distance from the main road, and could be seen from a point in the approach, nearly two miles away. From this point the road descended in a straight line, into a long valley, and then rose by a gradual ascent upon a high ridge opposite. As we commenced descending into this valley, we noticed a man riding at a swift pace up the hill, directly in front of us. My heart gave a sudden bound as my eyes rested upon him. Were my suspicions indeed too true? The horseman was only visible for two or three minutes, and

then disappeared just at the point where a road led off to the house in which Mrs. Ruffin lived.

An exclamation of alarm escaped the lips of Mr. O——. His whip was applied to the horses with a smarting energy that caused them nearly to double their rapid pace. Down the hill we dashed at a furious rate, and up the one opposite with scarcely a perceptible diminution of speed. In a little while we were in sight of the house. There was a horse standing at the gate. Mr. O—— applied the whip still more vigorously—and in a few minutes we were there; as we sprung from the wagon, our ears were pierced by one of the most heart-rending, despairing cries that it has ever been my lot to hear. It chilled the blood in my veins, and caused a cold shudder to run over my whole body. Before we could reach the door, a man (it was Ruffin himself) emerged from the house, bearing little Ella in his arms. Our presence. so unexpected, confused him for a moment; before he could recover himself, the sharp crack of a pistol rang upon the air, and he fell backward upon the ground. Ere the child he held in his arms struck the earth, she was snatched away by the grandfather, who rushed into the house, and up to his daughter's chamber, in order to restore her treasure to her arms. He was too late! The mother's heart was broken! He found her upon the floor, to all appearances dead. She never spoke again. Life rallied feebly after a few hours, but gradually declined from that time, until the vital spark went out entirely. She recovered her perceptions far enough to recognise her child, over whom she wept as if her eyes were a fountain of

tears. She died, clasping the sweet young creature in her arms.

When I saw Ruffin fall, I hurried to him, and found the blood flowing freely from his side. A servant, whom the report of the pistol brought to the door, assisted me to take him into the house. He was insensible.

On removing his clothes and examining the wound, I found that the injury was not at all serious. The ball had struck one of his ribs, on the right side, fracturing it, and then glanced upward, tearing away the thin covering of flesh, and lodging against the clavicle. It was easily extracted. While engaged in doing this, I was summoned to attend Mrs. Ruffin. I obeyed this summons immediately, and found her in the state I have described. Perceiving that her condition was beyond the reach of medicine, I retired as quickly as possible to attend to the wounded man below. By the time I had completed all the required dressings he recovered his senses. As soon as he fully comprehended where he was, and the circumstances under which he was placed, he rose up from the sofa upon which he was lying, staggered toward the door, and, regardless of all I could say, mounted his horse and rode off.

When these facts became known, on the following day, to the court, all proceedings in the case were stopped. But it was too late—at least too late for the heart-broken mother. She could no more be affected by human agencies. She had suffered her last pang. Her fear, and sorrow, and pain were at an end for ever.

Charles Ruffin left Baltimore immediately after

her death I have never seen him since. He may yet be living. If so, wherever he is, he must bear about him a moral cancer that is eating daily and hourly into his heart. I would not have his consciousness for millions of worlds.

THE LONE OLD MAN.

Passing a few days in the village of P——, my attention was attracted by the air of neglect apparent in and around a tastefully built cottage, that seemed once to have been the pride and pleasure of its owner. Choice roses and fragrant honeysuckles clambered up the white columns of the porch, prodigal of sweetness; but the vigorous shoots of the one, and the long, twining branches of the other, swayed in the air, or drooped toward the ground, vainly seeking for support. Evidently, not for months had the pruning-knife or training hand been busy there. Near by the entrance-gate, stood two cone-like cedars, tall and cleanly cut—but dead; their brown, needle-shaped leaves shivering down under the touch of every passing breeze, and covering the verdureless ground beneath. Grass was springing up in all the pleasant walks, and the untrimmed box borders were ragged and neglected. Vine trellises had broken pannels here and there; all over the garden were seen weeds and tangled

undergrowth. Only a single shutter in front of the cottage was unfastened, and that stood always open, early or late. Twice I had gone by without seeing any evidence of life about the neglected dwelling; but in passing the third time, I observed a white-haired old man walking, with his hands behind him and his eyes upon the ground, backward and forward, slowly, in one of the grass-grown walks. There was something in his appearance that was inexpressibly sad. I looked at him for a few moments, and then kept on; but so fixed was his image in my mind, in that brief period, that the vivid impression still remains.

P——, numbering one thousand inhabitants, all told, had three taverns, or places of "Entertainment for Man and Beast," and twelve shops for the retail of liquor. These last were all kept by Irishmen and Germans. At one of the taverns—the best in the place, and that isn't saying much in its favour—I was staying. The bar was well furnished with bad liquors, and the bar-room never free from idlers and tavern-loungers, mostly belonging to the village, as could readily be inferred from the tenor of their conversation. I did not fail to remark, that scarcely one of these persons spoke half a dozen words without an oath or profane expression; and I also noted the fact, that they were never so animated in conversation as when referring to something obscene, vile, or cruel. At temperance and virtue they scouted; and even went so far as to allege scandals against a clergyman in the village, whom I knew to be one of the purest of men. Worst of all was the presence of two or three lads in the bar-room, who listened

to the corrupt conversation eagerly, and drank in all that was said with too evident pleasure.

"Who lives in the brown cottage at the upper end of the street, on this side?" I asked of the landlord.

"Judge Williams," he answered, coldly, as he turned away.

"Who is Judge Williams?" I inquired, as soon as I got the landlord's ear again.

"He's one of our judges," was curtly replied, and again he turned from me.

This only piqued my curiosity.

"Do you know Judge Williams?" I asked of a rough-looking man whom I had observed lounging about the tavern ever since my arrival there, and who had just turned from the bar, where he had been drinking.

"I ought to know him—curse his picture!" answered the man, frowning.

He looked at me for a few moments, evidently to see whether I meant to insult him by the question, and then turned, muttering something that I could not make out, and left the bar-room.

"No good blood in him for Judge Williams," said a man who had overheard my question.

"Why not?" was my natural inquiry.

"The judge gave him a year in the State prison, for biting off his brother's ear in a drunken quarrel."

"Ah! that explains it. But what of Judge Williams? There's something wrong about him, is there not?"

The man shrugged his shoulders. As he was about replying, some one called him. He left me.

Just then a boy came in and scattered half a dozen small printed handbills through the bar.

"What are these?" gruffly asked the landlord.

"There's to be a Maine Law meeting at the Lyceum Hall to-night," replied the boy, looking sideways at the landlord as he spoke. "Won't you come? Judge Williams is going to speak."

There was impertinence as well humour in the boy's manner. The landlord, hot with uncontrollable anger, on the instant uttered a wicked imprecation, and then hurled an empty glass at his head. The missile passed him within an inch, and striking the wall, was shattered into a hundred fragments. As the now frightened lad scampered away, some of the bar-room inmates laughed, some looked grave, and one or two rebuked the passionate man for an act which might have resulted in murder.

"Give me them bills," said the landlord, coming hastily from behind his bar. Gathering up as many of the printed slips of paper as he could get his hands upon, he tore them into shreds, with violent gestures and oaths, and then threw them into the street. Two or three remained in possession of those who, like myself, declined yielding them up to the incensed individual who considered himself particularly insulted by their intrusion on his premises.

Next came, as a very natural result, a discussion, among the bar-room loungers, of the Maine Law question. The landlord was too much excited to think clearly or talk coherently; so he only used profane expletives. Some ridiculed the whole movement as preposterous: some cursed the leaders, and

some ma le themselves merry at the expense of the cold-water men. Nearly all present had indulged their particular humour on the subject, and conversation was beginning to flag, when a young man whom I had noticed as sadly fallen, yet retaining traces of better condition and higher intelligence than any around him, arose by a table at which he had been half crouching, and extending one hand in an energetic manner, said—

"You may all talk as you please, but I see no hope but in the Maine Law."

"There, now, Dick Thomas! do you just hush up. Nobody asked for your opinion, and nobody wants it."

The man turned quickly to the landlord, who had thus roughly interrupted him, and after fixing his eyes sharply upon him for some moments, retorted—

"You may rob us of reason and virtue; but of free speech—never! You've all had your say, and now I'm going to have mine. If you don't wish to listen, you can retire."

"You've got to retire, young man!" exclaimed the landlord, his face again hot with anger; and as he said this, he came hastily from behind the bar, and advancing toward the object of his wrath, assumed a menacing attitude. "Go, this instant, or I will pitch you head foremost into the street."

"I wish you would put a hand on me," said the other, in a hissing voice. There was murder in his eye, and an iron resolution in his tone. For several moments the two men glared savagely at each other; then the landlord retired behind the bar.

"Be content with your place there, and your work there, old fellow!" said the young man, with a bitter sneer, "but don't attempt what is beyond your ability." Then turning to the company, he repeated the words spoken a little while before, and in the earnest, impressive manner at first apparent.

"You may all talk as you please," he said, "but I see no hope but in the Maine Law. And there is no other hope for such as me. Ten times have I taken the pledge, and God knows it was taken in all sincerity! But with vitiated appetite, and temptation ever in my path, how was I to stand? Keep liquor out of my sight, and I can do well enough; but with a tavern or groggery at every corner, the case is hopeless. I voted for the Maine Law at the last election, and if I live to visit the polls again, my ballot shall be cast on the side of virtue, order, and sobriety. What a cursed infatuation—what a blinding folly this drinking is! Are you, or you, or you, any the better for it!" turning quickly from one to another, as he uttered these words. "I will not pause for your answer, 'No'—your faces give a feeble negative; but your whole appearance responds, trumpet-tongued, 'No—no—no.' Ah, my friends! I know how it is with myself, and I know how it is with you. While this man-trap is ever in the way, our feet must stumble. What hope for us is here? None—none. There sits the great lazy spider, his web nicely spread abroad, and we, the poor victims, cannot go by without getting hopelessly entangled. All over the land are these spiders and their webs, and there is

no besom to sweep them aside. Give us the Maine Law, and we have a broom that will do the work effectually. I go for this law, gentlemen! And I am going to the meeting to-night. Judge Williams is to speak. Poor man! He will speak in vain, for all the good speaking will do him; but if he doesn't stir all hearts to their lowest depths, call Dick Thomas a fool!"

"You'll give 'em a speech, too, won't you?" said the landlord, in impotent contempt.

"If you're there, I will," retorted Thomas. "I couldn't have a better subject than the spider and the fly."

A shout of applause from the rude inmates of the bar-room answered this cutting speech; and under the governing impulse of the moment, it was voted to attend the Maine Law meeting in a body.

"You'd better drink all round to bolster up good resolution," said the landlord, forcing a laugh. He had sense enough to see the folly of quarrelling with his customers, and so repressed his irritation.

"Not a bad idea," quickly answered one of the company; and in a moment the fickle crew were at the counter, and the landlord as busy as he could be in mixing his tempting poisons for their lips. I turned off, sad at the sight, and left the bar-room.

At an early hour in the evening, I was at Lyceum Hall. The room was nearly filled on my arrival; but I managed to get a place near the speaker's stand.

"Judge Williams is to speak," I heard whispered behind me. This seemed the leading attraction of

the evening. Who Judge Williams was, or what the particular interest attaching to him, I had not yet learned. That a blight was on him in his old age, was plain; but where and what the blight was, I could infer but vaguely.

The meeting was organized in due form, and resolutions offered approving the Maine Law, and calling upon the legislature of the state to enact one similar in its provisions. Then came a pause of expectation. The old man I had thought to see on the stand was not there. I looked around the room, but failed to recognise him. Others seemed in like expectation with myself. There was now a movement near the door. I turned with the rest of the audience, and saw the pale, thin, intelligent face of the old man I had noticed at the brown cottage.

"There is Judge Williams," I heard passing from lip to lip. He moved slowly along the aisle until he reached the platform, which he ascended, and took a chair near the president of the meeting.

"The secretary will read the resolutions again," said the chairman.

The resolutions were accordingly read. A brief silence followed, and then Judge Williams arose in a slow, dignified manner. A little while he stood; his fine eyes, that seemed to light up his whole face, wandering over the audience. All was as still as if there had not been a living soul in the room.

"My friends,"—his voice was low, and trembled slightly,—"I meet you this evening in public assemblage, for the first time in many months. I may never meet you again. A lonely old man,

with all hope in life gone, I am a lingerer here only for a little while. Soon, the places that have seen me will see me no more. I shall pass the bourn from which no traveller returns—and pass it, I feel, right early. I have been among you for many years; and in all my public life I have, in the fear of God, sought to judge rightly between my fellow men. To err is human—therefore I have not been free from error; but the merit of a good intention I must, in justice, claim.

"My friends, look at me as I stand before you to-night," and he advanced a few paces on the platform. "This head is whiter than it was a year ago—this hand not so steady—this poor body less firm and erect. I am a shattered wreck on the sea of life; the last frail vessel of a goodly fleet that went down in the pitiless tempest. How vainly did I search for a harbour, when I saw the storm gathering; but there was none in which we might ride in safety.

"Fellow citizens!"—his form was now more erect, and his tones firmer and deeper—"turn your thoughts back for twenty years, such of you as can recall events for so long a period. Did I not then say to you that licensed drinking-houses would be a curse to our beautiful village? Did I not then urge, warn, implore you on the subject, and with all the little eloquence I possessed? Did I not then declare it as my belief that, as a body of citizens, united in corporate form to secure our mutual well-being, it was our duty to guard the weak and the youthful from the fascination of drink, by prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors in our village? We had

as much the right to do this, as the right to restrict or prohibit the sale of poison. It was a measure of self-protection as legitimate as any other. Who was to be wronged by it? The man who, too idle to work, sought to live by corrupting his neighbours, and sowing broadcast the seeds of vice, crime, depravity, and eternal death? No; not even he was to suffer wrong! Better far, even for him, that he should be compelled to do service in society in order to get his bread. In every view, therefore, the restriction I then urged was the right one. But you, my fellow-citizens, called my reasoning fallacious, and me visionary or tyrannical.

"Well, in the twenty years which have passed since I first advocated an entire restriction of the sale here, I have seen more than twenty of our most promising young men—some of their gray-haired fathers are here to-night—thrust down into drunkard's graves. Why, my friends,"—he spoke now with a sudden, indignant energy,—"one of those young men, with his intellect undimmed, would have been worth a thousand of the miserable wretches who destroyed them, and for whose maintenance you so generously provided the trade of dram-selling. How my heart swells and throbs, and almost suffocates me with indignation at the thought. But, ah! how impotently!"

Mournful, very low and mournful were these last words.

"Well, my friends," he resumed, after a pause; "to protect and support the idle, vicious dram-seller, you sacrificed the rising hope of your village. Unto this bloody Moloch you brought your sons. For

twenty years I have sat on the Bench; and I will say now, before God and man, that in nine cases out of ten, every crime and outrage which has taken place during that period, in this county, was traceable, directly or indirectly, to the use of intoxicating drinks.

"And the history of crime all over our land gives but a parallel testimony. And yet the rumseller is protected in his accursed traffic—is regularly licensed to destroy the bodies and souls of your neighbours and children; and if we, all whose hopes in life are blasted by this evil, lift our voices against it, and ask for its suppression by the firm hand of the law, we are branded with coarse epithets, and called visionary, and fanatical disturbers of settled order.

"Show me any good that has been done in P—— by dram-drinking. Show me a man made more virtuous and thrifty—a better husband, father, and citizen. Bring him here to-night, and let us look upon him. Where is he? Alas! he is not to be found. You cannot show the good, but the evil. God help us! It is everywhere!

"My friends, you all know that I and mine have been cursed with this curse; but how deeply, few have imagined. Let me lift the curtain for you to-night—lift it for a moment, and then let it fall for ever. Three sons grew up to manhood. True-hearted, clear-minded they were, and full of promise for the future. One studied law, one medicine, and the other chose the life of a farmer. I used no intoxicating drinks in my house, and yet these three goodly sons sleep in drunkards' graves. Beyond my own house I could not protect them.

Temptation was on every hand; temptation sanctioned by law, and made respectable through the blind favour of men whose position gave influence to their precept and example. Like other young men, they had their weaknesses; like other young men, they thought lightly of warning; like other young men, they moved pleasantly along in the smooth current of the world, all unheeding the danger by which they were surrounded, until resistance to the downward course was hopeless.

"Three years ago, the eldest was thrust from one of your taverns, at a late hour of the night, and falling on the pavement, received a wound on the head that produced insanity. He is since dead. The second, after six months' abstinence, was enticed into the same den of evil, by some wicked men who knew his weakness. He fell, never to rise again. Unhappy young man! How hard he struggled with his appetite! Oh! how bitterly I have seen him weep—how earnestly I have heard him pray, in the lonely night-watch, for strength; yet he died while the mad fever of intoxication was in his brain.

"The third, my youngest son—his mother's idol—he, too, went the same way. Of all my sons, he alone married. The purest, fondest, sweetest of women was the dear child he brought away from her warm nest at home, to grace and brighten our household. We had no daughter of our own; and so, all the love in our hearts a daughter would have called forth, was lavished upon this beautiful dove. I need not describe her to you, for you have seen her, and many of you loved her. But she is at rest."

The old man's voice choked. For a little while he stood silent, unable, from irrepressible emotion, to proceed. At last he said, in a husky whisper—

"She is at rest now. Let me, as calmly as I am able, tell you how she passed away. It was not peacefully and sweetly as an infant sinks to sleep in its mother's arms. Ah, no!—no! Her death was violent!"

What a thrill passed through the assembly! White faces bent forward eagerly, and breaths were held in appalled expectation.

"She was murdered by her husband!"

The old man sunk into a chair, while a groan rose from the assembly.

"No good end is to be gained by concealment," resumed Judge Williams, as he arose and in a firmer voice went on—"if the revelation spur you to action, all I desire is accomplished. My son came home one night, less than a year ago, intoxicated, after a longer period of sobriety than usual. He had never treated his wife with personal unkindness. If she remonstrated with him, he showed no irritation; and often, through her influence, would make temporary efforts at reformation. He had passed to her room only a short time, when I heard a momentary shuffling of feet, and a smothered exclamation. There was something in the sound that caused me to start up and listen. But nothing more was heard for at least five minutes, when I was aroused by the falling of a heavy body in their chamber. I repaired thither on the instant. Sight of horror! My son lay dying, in his own blood, on the floor; the fatal razor with which the death deed was done, clutched

in his hand. You all remember this dreadful tragedy. But there was something more dreadful still, of which you have never been told. Ere turning his hand upon himself, my son smothered with pillows the——"

The old man staggered back, and sat down again.

"God help me!" he resumed, after a moment or two. "I cannot say more. We buried them side by side; but we were broken-hearted. A few weeks more, and my poor wife followed them, leaving me a lonely old man, all the green branches of the tree withered, and the root nearly sapless and dead.

"What need is there for me to say more?" he added, after a pause. "I have shown you the bitter fruits of the traffic. Look at them. Reason of them among yourselves, and make your own decision. If you continue to sow the seed you are now sowing, you must expect no better harvest. On me the evil has done its worst. But for the sake of your children and neighbours, let me implore you to turn aside from your beautiful village this torrent of vice that is yearly sweeping its scores to destruction."

There were few dry eyes in the assembly when Judge Williams sat down; and it hardly need be told here, that the resolutions were passed by acclamation. At my next visit to P——, the brown cottage had found another owner, and the lonely old man was sleeping in the village graveyard.

A NEW EXPERIENCE IN LIFE.

Two brothers met after an absence of many years. One of them had remained at home, or, rather, in the neighbourhood of their early home. The other sought, in a distant country, the wealth he saw no opportunity to acquire in the pleasant village where his eyes first opened upon the light. But the beauty of mountain, valley, lake, and breezy woodland had indelibly impressed his spirit, and now, disappointed with the world—though the world had given him riches—he had returned, under the vain delusion that here he would find that tranquillity and contentment which, thus far in life, he had failed to secure. We say delusion—for, like other men, he carried in his bosom the elements of his dissatisfaction, which no mere change of place could remove. It was innocent childhood that made him happy in that old home to which he now returned; but childhood had passed forever. He came back, not with the perceptions and capabilities of a child, but with the unsatisfied yearnings of a man. Ah! how changed was all; changed, and yet the same. There was the landscape, in all its varied attraction of wood and river and mountain, but to him its beauty had departed. He wandered away to the old haunts, but their spell was gone. He could have wept in the bitterness of his disappointment

"You look troubled, Edward," remarked his brother, on the day succeeding his return.

"Do I, William?" he said, with a forced smile. "It should not be so, for I have no trouble to weigh down my spirits."

Yet, even while he spoke, the feeble light faded from his countenance.

How strongly contrasted were the two brothers! The one having but little of this world's goods; the other possessing large wealth. The one bearing on his brow an ever-cheerful expression; the other a look of self-weariness and discontent.

In a few days, Edward announced his intention to purchase a handsome estate offered for sale in the village, and remove his family thither. He had been in many places, but none pleased him like this. Here, if anywhere in the world, he believed he would find that repose of mind he had sought for so long, yet vainly.

Accordingly, the estate was purchased, and, in due time, Edward J—— brought his family, consisting of his wife and three children—two sons and a daughter—to reside in the pleasant village of Glenwood.

Not a very long time passed before William J—— saw that his brother was far from being a happy man. The cause, to a close observer like himself, was clearly apparent. Edward was a very selfish man—and such men are always unhappy. While in the pursuit of a desired object, the mind, from anticipation and its own activity, may be pleasantly excited. But when the object is gained, and mental activity declines, there succeeds a state of op-

pressive disquietude. Selfishness, like the horse-leech's daughter, for ever cries, "Give, give," and for ever remains unsatisfied.

In the possession of wealth, Edward J—— fully believed happiness was to be found. In seeking to gain wealth, he had thought little of the interests of others. Not that he recklessly trampled on his neighbours' rights, or wrested from the weak what was lawfully their own. His mercantile pride—honour he would have called it—prevented such lapses from integrity. But, as he moved onward, with something like giant strides, conscious of his own strength, he had no sympathy for the less fortunate, and never once paused to lift a fallen one, or to aid a feeble toiler on the way of life. No generous principles belonged to the code of ethics by which he was governed. Benevolence he accounted a weakness, and care for others' interests the folly of a class, less to be commended than censured. "Let every man mind his own business, and every man take care of himself," he would sometimes say. "Help yourself is the world's best motto. This constant preaching up of benevolence and humanity only makes idlers and dependants."

Edward J—— fully acted out his principles. And so, for future enjoyment, he had only laid up wealth. In all his business life, there was not a single green spot watered by the tears of benevolence, or warmed by the sunshine of gratitude, back to which thought could go, and find delight in the remembrance. All was a dull, dead blank of money-getting, the recollection of which gave more pain than pleasure.

No wonder that, after the excitement of removal, and the interested state of mind attendant upon the fitting up of a new home, the mind of Edward J—— receded again to its state of disquietude, or that the old shadows deepened once more on his brow.

How broadly contrasted was the stately mansion he occupied with the humble cottage in which his brother resided, and to which, in self-weariness, he often repaired. Yet, so selfishly did he love his own, that never an impulse of generosity toward this brother stirred, even for a moment, the dead surface of humanity's waters lying stagnant in his bosom. If he thought of his humble circumstances at all, it was with something of shame that one so nearly related should occupy so low a position.

One morning, Edward called upon William J——, and with unusual animation said—

"I have just made a valuable discovery."

"Ah! What is it?" inquired his brother.

"You know the beautiful side-slope of land just beyond my meadow?"

"Where Morgan lives?" said William.

"Yes. There are some ten acres, finely situated, exceedingly fertile, and in a high state of cultivation."

"Well?" William looked, inquiringly, at his brother.

"That piece of ground belongs, unquestionably, to my estate."

"What!" The brother was startled at this announcement; for he saw a purpose in Edward's

mind to claim it as his own, if he could prove that the right referred to did actually exist.

"That piece of ground is mine."

"Why do you say so?"

"It originally belonged to the property I have purchased."

"I know it did. But Morgan bought it from the former owner, more than fifteen years ago."

"But never met his payments, and never got a full title."

"How do you know that?"

"I have the information from good authority—the best, I presume, in the county."

"From whom?"

"Aldridge. And he says he can recover it for me."

"Did you purchase it, Edward?" asked William, looking steadfastly into the countenance of his brother.

"I purchased Glenwood, and all the rights and appurtenances thereto belonging, and this I find to be, legally, a portion of the estate—and a valuable one. It is mine—and it has been one of my maxims in life always to claim my own."

An indignant rebuke was on the tongue of William J——, but he repressed its utterance, for estrangement, and consequent loss of influence, would have been the sure consequence.

"Before taking any steps in this matter," he said, "look very minutely into the history of the transaction between Morgan and the previous owner of Glenwood, the late Mr. Erskin. Morgan was his gardener, and had laid Mr. Erskin under a debt

of gratitude, by saving the life of an only son at the imminent risk of his own. As some return, he offered him the cottage in which he lived, and the ten acres of ground by which it was surrounded, at a very moderate valuation, Morgan to pay him a small sum, agreed upon, every year. The place was actually worth three or four times what Morgan was to give for it. Mr. Erskin at first thought of transferring it to him as a free-will offering, but he believed the benefit would be really greater, if Morgan, by industry, economy, and self-denial, earned and saved sufficient to pay what was asked for the property. At the end of a year the gardener brought the money due as the first instalment. Mr. Erskin felt a reluctance to take it, and, after questioning him as to the product of the farm, finally told him to expend the money in an improvement designated by himself. Sickness, and bad crops, during the next year, prevented the payment of the second instalment. The third and fourth years were more prosperous. The only sums paid to Mr. Erskin were received by him during these years."

"So I am informed," said Edward. "And I learn, further, that no transfer of the property was ever made in due legal form. Mr. Erskin died intestate."

"He did; and his son came by heirship into possession of all his property."

"And he, dying a few years later, disposed of the estate by will."

"Not naming Morgan's farm," said William, "which he fully believed had been, during his

father's lifetime, properly transferred to the present possessor."

"A very serious mistake, as Morgan will find," said Edward.

"You will not question his title to the property, Edward?"

"I assuredly will."

"He has a large family. It is his all."

"No matter. He has never paid for it, and it is not, therefore, his property. Glenwood is just so much the less valuable by the abstraction of this portion, and I am, in consequence, the sufferer. Had he paid for the land, as he had engaged to do, the money would, most probably, have been expended in improvements. So, you see, my rights are clear."

"Ah, brother! you cannot find it in your heart to ruin this worthy man. He has a large family, dependent on the product of his farm, which barely suffices to give them a comfortable living."

"I have no desire to ruin him, William. But he has no right to my property. If Morgan wishes to remain where he is, I will not, for the present, disturb him. But he must pay me an annual rent."

As mildly as possible, yet very earnestly, did William J—— urge a different course of action upon his brother; but with no good effect. Legal measures were early taken, and due notice served upon Morgan, who, on submitting his papers to a lawyer, was appalled to learn that they contained informalities and defects, clearly invalidating his title. In a state of much alarm and excitement, he called upon William J——, and implored him to use his

influence with his brother to stop the unrighteous proceeding. William could not give him much encouragement, though his heart ached for the unhappy man. It so happened that Morgan passed from William J——'s place of business, as the brother entered. The two men had never met; and the rich owner of Glenwood did not know, by sight, the individual whose farm he coveted.

"Who is that man?" he inquired, in a voice of surprise.

"Why do you ask?"

"What ails him? His face was pale as ashes, and his eyes wild like those of one in terror, or deranged."

"He is in great distress."

"From what cause? Has he committed a crime? Are the minions of justice at his heels?"

"No. He is a man of blameless life—not as careful as he should have been in the management of his affairs. Upon a sudden, he finds himself on the brink of ruin. He put too much faith in the world. He thought too well of his fellow-men."

"A common fault," was the sententious answer. "But what of this man? Something in his face has interested me. Can I aid him in his troubles?"

"Yes, brother, you can aid him, and at no loss to yourself. No loss, did I say? Rather let me say, to your infinite gain."

"What do you mean? Infinite gain! You make use of a very strong word, William."

"I do; yet, with a full appreciation of its meaning. Every thing gained to true happiness is an infinite gain. Believe me. there are few sources of

human pleasure so lasting as the memory of a good deed. What we seek, with only a selfish regard to our own enjoyment, loses its charm with possession. This is the life-experience of every one. But the benefits we confer upon others, bless in a perpetual remembrance of the delight we have created."

Only a dim perception of what this meant dawned upon the mind of Edward. Yet, a few rays of light streamed in upon his moral darkness.

"The blessing of a good deed, brother Edward!" said William, speaking with something of enthusiasm in his manner—"did you ever think what a depth of meaning was in the words? Generous, noble, unselfish actions are like perennial springs, sending forth sweet and fertilizing waters. How much they lose who, having the power to do good, lack the generous impulse."

"All very well, and very true, no doubt," said the rich brother, with a slight air of impatience. "But you haven't told me of the individual in whose case you desire to interest me."

"His name is Morgan," was answered.

"Morgan!" An instant change was visible in Edward J——. His face flushed; his brow contracted, and his eyes grew stern.

"Remember, my brother," said William, in a calm, yet earnest and affectionate voice, "that God has bestowed upon you, of this world's goods, more than sufficient to supply all your real wants; while to this poor man he has given what barely suffices, with care and labour, to supply food, raiment, and an humble home for his wife and little ones. You have 'flocks and herds'—do not take his 'little

ewe-lamb.' Remember David and the prophet Nathan."

"Good morning!" said Edward, turning off, suddenly, and leaving his brother.

What a conflict in the rich man's mind did this incident and conversation arouse! The white, terrified face of poor Morgan, haunted him like a spectre; and not less troublesome were the warning words and suggestions of his kinsman. On the afternoon of that day he was to have met his legal adviser, and given further instructions for the prosecution of the case against Morgan. But Aldridge waited for his appearance in vain. Evening found him restless, unhappy, and in a very undecided state of mind. He was sitting, moodily, with his hand shading the light from his face, when a little daughter, who was at the centre-table, reading in the Bible, said—

"Oh, papa. Just listen to this—" And she read aloud—

"'And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him;

but he took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb four-fold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man.'

"And did king David do that?" said the child, lifting her eyes from the page—"I thought him a good man; but this was so wicked!"

The father's countenance was turned more into shadow, and he answered nothing. The child waited his reply for some moments; but none coming, she bent her eyes again to the holy volume, and continued reading, but not aloud.

In a little while Mr. J—— arose, and after walking the floor for the space of five or ten minutes, left the sitting-room. It is doubtful whether he or Morgan were most unhappy at that particular period of time.

It was a clear, moonlight night. Too much disturbed to bear the quietude within, the rich man walked forth to find a more burdening stillness without. The silence and beauty of nature agitated instead of calming him. All around was in harmony with the great Creator, while the discord of assaulted selfishness made tumult in his breast. How a generous impulse toward Morgan, cherished and made active, would have clothed his spirit with peace as a mantle! What a different work had cruel and exacting selfishness wrought!

As he walked on, with no purpose in his mind,

a man passed him hurriedly. A glimpse at his face, as the moonlight fell broadly upon it, showed the pale, anxious, depressed countenance of poor Morgan. The sight caused a low shudder to go creeping to his heart. Nay, more, it awakened a feeling of pity in his bosom. Pity is but the handmaid of sympathy. The rich man's thought went homeward with the victim of his cupidity—went home with him, though he strove hard to turn it in another direction—while fancy made pictures of the grief, fear, and anxious dread of the future that filled the hearts of all in that humble dwelling. Suddenly he stood still, and bent his head in deep thought. Then he started onward again, but evidently with a purpose in his mind, for he took long strides, and bent forward like a man eager to reach the point toward which his steps were directed. He was soon at the house of Aldridge, the lawyer.

"I want a piece of writing made out immediately," said he, as the lawyer invited him to enter his office.

"To-night?" inquired Aldridge.

"Yes—to-night. Can you do it?"

"Oh, certainly, if it be not too long."

"I wish a quit-claim drawn up in favour of Morgan."

"A quit-claim!"

Aldridge might well be surprised.

"Yes. Write it out in due form; and let it describe accurately the cottage and ten acres now in his possession. How long will it take you?"

"Not long. Half an hour, perhaps. But, Mr.

J——, what does all this mean? Has Morgan indemnified you?"

"No matter as to that, Mr. Aldridge," was the rather cold reply. "The quit-claim I wish drawn. I will wait for it."

In a short time the paper was ready, attested and witnessed. Thrusting it into his pocket, Mr. J—— hurried from the presence of the lawyer. His purpose was to go home. But now sympathy for those he had made wretched was awakened, he could not bear its pressure upon his own feelings. The dwelling of Morgan was at no great distance. Thither his steps were directed. A light shone through one of the windows. As he drew near, he saw, moving slowly against the wall and ceiling of the room, to and fro, the shadow of a man. Nearer still, and he could see all the inmates of the room. By a table sat a woman in an attitude of deep dejection; she had been weeping. A boy stood beside her with his arm lying on her neck, while a little girl sat on a low stool, her face buried in her mother's lap. The whole picture conveyed to the mind of Mr. J—— an idea of extreme wretchedness, and touched him deeply. A few moments only did he contemplate the scene.

How suddenly the tableaux changed when Mr. J—— entered, and briefly making known his errand, presented to Morgan the quit-claim deed! What joy lit up every face; what gratitude found ardent words; what blessings were invoked for him and his!

In a tumult of pleasure such as he had never before experienced, Mr. J—— hurried from the pre-

sence of the overjoyed family, and took his way homeward. How light were his steps! With what a new sensation did he drink in the pure evening air, that seemed nectar to his expanding lungs. How beautiful the moon looked, smiling down upon him; and in the eye of every bright star was a sparkling approval of his manly deed. Never in his whole life had he done an act from which he derived so exquisite a sense of pleasure. He had tasted angel's food.

Calm was the sleep of Mr. J——. Ah! how often he had tossed on his pillow until after the midnight watches. Morning found him with a new sense of enjoyment in life. He could hardly understand its meaning. Dimly he perceived the truth at first, but more and more clearly as his brother's words came back to his remembrance—"There are few sources of pleasure so lasting as the memory of a good deed." This had sounded strange, almost repulsive to his ears. Now it was perceived as a beautiful truth. And so was this—"How much they lose who, having the power to do good, lack the generous impulse."

"How much have I lost!" he said to himself, with an involuntary sigh. "Here is a new experience in life. I am wiser than I was yesterday; and wiser, I trust, to some good purpose."

And did this prove to be the case? Profited this rich man by the discovery that sources of happiness were within his reach undreamed of before? He did; and yet how often came the dark clouds of selfishness over his mind, obscuring his nobler perceptions! But a good seed was planted, and

there was one in the village of Glenwood, who loved him and mankind too well to let the soil in which it was cast remain uncultured. From that little seed a plant sprung up, growing in time to a goodly tree, and spreading its branches forth in the air of heaven. Beneath its shadow many, weary on the rugged journey of life, found rest and shelter.

Edward J——, from a narrow-minded, unhappy self-seeker, became a man of generous impulses, dispensing blessings with a liberal hand, that ever came back to him with a double portion of delight.

The charm of Glenwood was restored. It looked to him even more beautiful than in childhood. At this he sometimes wondered—for, at his first return, after long years of absence, the old beauty had departed. But the reader finds here no mystery; nor was it any to him, when he contrasted his state of mind with that existing, when, tired of himself and the world, he came back to his native village, seeking for rest, yet finding none, until he sought it in self-abnegation and good deeds to his fellowmen.

THE LITTLE MAID OF ALL WORK.

SUPPER was not ready when Abraham Munday lifted the latch of his humble dwelling, at the close of a long, weary summer day. He was not greatly disappointed, for it often so happened. The table was on the floor, partly set, and the kettle over the fire.

"There it is again!" exclaimed Mrs. Munday, fretfully. "Home from work, and no supper ready. The baby has been *so* cross!—hardly out of my arms the whole afternoon. I'm glad you've come, though. Here, take him while I fly around and get things on the table."

Mr. Munday held out his arms for the little one, who sprung into them with a baby shout.

Mrs. Munday did fly around in good earnest. A few pieces of light wood thrown on the fire soon made the kettle sing, and steam, and bubble. In a wonderfully short space of time all was ready, and the little family, consisting of husband, wife, and three children, were gathered around the table. To mother's arms baby was transferred, and she had the no very easy task of pouring out her husband's tea, preparing cups of milk and water for the two older of the little ones, and restraining the baby, who was grappling first the sugar-bowl, then the milk-pitcher, and next the tea-pot.

"There!" suddenly exclaimed Mrs. Munday. And two quick slaps on baby's hand were heard. Baby, of course, answered promptly with a wild scream. But what had baby done? Look into the tea-tray,—the whole surface is covered with milk. His busy, fluttering hands have overturned the pitcher.

Poor Mrs. Munday lost her temper completely.

"It's no use to attempt eating with this child," said she, pushing her chair back from the table. "I never have any good of my meals."

Mr. Munday's appetite failed him at once. He continued to eat, however, but more hurriedly. Soon he pushed back his chair, also, and rising up, said cheerfully—

"There, I'm done, Lotty. Give me the baby, while you eat your supper."

And he took the sobbing child from the arms of its mother. Tossing it up, and speaking to it in a lively, affectionate tone of voice, he soon restored pleasure to the heart, and smiles to the countenance of the little one.

Mrs. Munday felt rebuked for her impatience. She often suffered from these silent rebukes. And yet, the trials of temper she daily endured were very great. No relish for food was left. The wants of the two children were attended to, and then, while Mr. Munday still held the baby, she busied herself in clearing off the table, washing up the tea things, and putting the room in order.

An hour later. Baby was asleep, and the other children with him in the land of dreams. Mrs. Munday was busy sewing on a little frock, and Mr.

Munday sat with his face turned from the light, lost in a brown study.

"Lotty," said the latter, waking up from his revery, and speaking with considerable emphasis—"it's no use for you to keep going on in this way any longer. You are wearing yourself out. And what's more, there's no comfort at home for any body. You must get a woman to help about the house."

"We can't afford it, Abraham," was Mrs. Munday's calm, but decided answer.

"We must afford it, Lotty. You are killing yourself."

"A woman will cost a dollar and a quarter a week, and her board at least as much more. We can't spare that sum—and you only getting ten dollars a week."

The argument was unanswerable. Mr. Munday sighed and was silent. Again his face was turned from the light; and again the hand of his wife plied quickly the glittering needle.

"I'll tell you what we might do," said Mrs. Munday, after the lapse of nearly ten minutes.

"Well?" her husband turned toward her and assumed a listening attitude.

"We might take a small girl to help in the family. It would only cost us her victuals and clothes."

Mr. Munday mused for some time before answering. He didn't just like the proposition.

"Any thing," he at length said, "to lighten your labour. But can you get one?"

"I think so. Do you remember poor Mrs. Bar-

row, who died last month? She left a little girl about eleven years old, with no one to see after her but an old aunt, who I've heard isn't very kind to the child. No doubt, she would be glad to get her into a good place. It would be very easy for her here. She could hold the baby, or rock it in the cradle while I was at work about the house—and do a great many little things for me, that would lighten my task wonderfully. It's the very thing, husband"—added Mrs. Munday with animation, "and if you agree, I will run over and see Mrs. Gooch, her aunt, in the morning before you go to work."

"How old did you say she was?" inquired Mr. Munday.

"She was eleven in the spring, I believe."

"Our Aggy is between nine and ten." Something like a sigh followed the words, for the thought of having his little Aggy turned out, motherless, among strangers, to do drudgery and task-work, forced itself upon his mind.

"True. But a year or so makes a great difference. Besides, Anna Barrow is an uncommonly smart girl for her age."

Mr. Munday sighed again.

"Well," he said, after being silent for a few moments, "you can do as you think best. But it does seem hard to make a servant of a mere child like that."

"You call the position in which she will be by too harsh a name," said Mrs. Munday. "I can make her very useful without overtasking her. And then, you know, as she has got to earn her

own living, she cannot acquire habits of industry too soon."

Mrs. Munday was now quite in earnest about the matter, so much so that her husband made no further objection. On the next morning, she called round to see Mrs. Gooch, the aunt of Anna Barrow. The offer to take the little girl was accepted at once.

When Mr. Munday came home at dinner time, he found the meal all ready and awaiting his appearance. Mrs. Munday looked cheerful and animated. In the corner of the room sat a slender little girl, not very much larger than Aggy, with the sleeping baby in her arms. She lifted her eyes timidly to the face of Mr. Munday, who gave her a kind look.

"Poor, motherless child!" Such was his thought.

"I can't tell you how much assistance she is to me," whispered Mrs. Munday to her husband, leaning over to him, as they sat at the table. "And the baby seems so fond of her."

Mr. Munday said nothing, but before his mind was distinctly pictured his own little girl, a servant in the home of a stranger. On his return from work in the evening, every thing wore a like improved appearance. Supper was ready, and Mrs. Munday had nothing of the worried look so apparent on the occasion of her first introduction to the reader. Every thing wore an improved appearance, did we say? No, not every thing. There was a change in the little orphan girl; and Mr. Munday saw, at a glance, that the change, so pleasant to contemplate, had been made at her expense. The

tidy look, noticed at dinner time, was gone. Her clothes were soiled and tumbled; her hair had lost its even, glossy appearance, and her manner showed extreme weariness of body and mind. She was holding the baby. None saw the tears that crept over her cheeks, as the family gathered around the tea-table, and, forgetful of her, enjoyed their evening meal.

Supper over, Mrs. Munday took the baby and undressed it, while Anna sat down to eat her portion of food. Four times, ere this was accomplished, did Mrs. Munday send her up to her chamber for something wanted either for herself or the child.

"You must learn to eat quick, Anna," said Mrs. Munday, ere the little girl, in consequence of these interruptions, was half through her supper. Anna looked frightened and confused, pushed back her chair, and stood gazing inquiringly at the face of her mistress.

"Are you done?" the latter coldly asked.

"Yes, ma'am," was timidly answered.

"Very well. Now I want you to clear off the table. Gather up all the things and take them out into the kitchen. Then shake the tablecloth, set the table back, and sweep up the room."

Mr. Munday looked at his wife, but said nothing.

"Shall I help Anna, mother?" inquired Aggy.

"No," was rather sharply answered. "Have you studied your lesson?"

"No, ma'am."

"Go about that, then; it will be as much as you can do before bedtime."

Mrs. Munday undressed her baby with considerable more deliberation of manner than usual, observing all the while the proceedings of Anna, and every now and then giving her a word of instruction. She felt very comfortable, as she finally leaned back in her chair with her little one asleep in her arms. By this time Anna was in the kitchen, where, according to instructions, she was washing up the tea-things. While thus engaged, to the best of her small ability, a cup slipped from her hand and was broken on the floor. The sound startled Mrs. Munday from her agreeable state of mind and body.

"What's that?" she cried.

"A cup, ma'am," was the trembling answer.

"You're a careless little girl," said Mrs. Munday, rather severely. The baby was now taken up stairs and laid in bed. After this, Mrs. Munday went to the kitchen to see how her little maid of all work was getting on with the supper dishes. Not altogether to her satisfaction, it must be owned.

"You will have to do these all over again," she said—not kindly and encouragingly, but with something captious and authoritative in her manner. "Throw out that water from the dish-pan and get some more."

Anna obeyed, and Mrs. Munday seated herself by the kitchen table, to observe her movements, and correct them when wrong.

"Not that way—Here, let me show you"—"Stop! I said it must be done in this way"—"Here—that is right'—"Don't set the dishes down so

hard; you'll break them—they're not made of iron."

These, and words of like tenor, were addressed to the child, who, anxious to do right, yet so confused as often to misapprehend what was said to her, managed at length to complete her task.

"Now sweep up the kitchen, and put things to rights. When you're done, come in to me," said Mrs. Munday, who now retired to the little sitting-room, where her husband was glancing over the daily paper, and Aggy engaged in studying her lesson. On entering, she remarked,

"It's more trouble to teach a girl like this than to do it yourself."

Mr. Munday said nothing; but he had his own thoughts.

"Mother, I'm sleepy; I want to go to bed," said Fanny, younger by two or three years than Aggy.

"I don't want to go yet; and besides, I haven't got my lesson," said the older sister.

"Wait until Anna is done in the kitchen, and she will go up and stay with you. Anna!" Mrs. Munday called to her, "make haste! I want you to put Fanny to bed."

In a few minutes Anna appeared, and as directed, went up stairs with Fanny.

"She looks tired. Hadn't you better tell her to go to bed also," suggested Mr. Munday.

"To bed!" ejaculated Mrs. Munday in a voice of surprise—"I've got something for her to do besides going to bed."

Mr. Munday resumed the reading of his paper and said no more. Fanny was soon asleep.

"Can't Anna go up with me, now? I'm afraid to go alone," said Aggy, as the little girl came down from the chamber.

"Yes, I suppose so. But you must go to sleep quickly. I've got something for Anna to do."

Mr. Munday sighed, and moved himself uneasily in his chair. In half an hour Anna came down,—Aggy was just asleep. As she made her appearance, the baby awoke and cried out.

"Run up and hush the baby to sleep before he gets wide awake," said Mrs. Munday.

The weary child went as directed. In a little while the low murmur of her voice was heard, as she attempted to quiet the babe by singing a nursery ditty. How often had her mother's voice soothed her to sleep by the selfsame words and melody! The babe stopped crying; and soon all was quiet in the chamber. Nearly half an hour passed, during which Mrs. Munday was occupied in sewing.

"I do believe that girl has fallen asleep," said she at length, letting her work drop in her lap, and assuming a listening attitude.

"Anna!" she called. But there was no answer.

"Anna!" The only returning sound was the echo of her own voice.

Mrs. Munday started up, and ascended to her chamber. Mr. Munday was by her side, as she entered the room. Sure enough; Anna had fallen asleep, leaning over the bed where the infant lay.

"Poor, motherless child!" said Mr. Munday, in a voice of tender compassion that reached the heart

of his wife, and awakened there some womanly emotions.

"Poor thing! I suppose she is tired out," said the latter. "She'd better go to bed." So she awakened her, and told her to go up into the garret, where a bed had been made for her on the floor. Thither the child proceeded, and there wept herself again to sleep. In her dream that night, she was with her mother, in her own pleasant home, and she was still dreaming of her mother and her home, when she was awakened by the sharp voice of Mrs. Munday, and told to get up quickly and come down, as it was broad daylight.

"You must kindle the fire and get the kettle on in a jiffy." Such was the order she received on passing the door of Mrs. Munday's room.

We will not describe, particularly, the trials of this day for our poor little maid of all work. They were very severe, for Mrs. Munday was a hard mistress. She had taken Anna as a help; though not with the purpose of overworking or oppressing her. But now that she had some one to lighten her burdens and "take steps for her," the temptation to consult her own ease was very great. Less wearied than in days past, because relieved of scores of little matters about the house, the aggregate of which had worn her down, she was lifted somewhat above an appreciating sympathy for the child, who, in thus relieving her, was herself heavily overtasked. Instead of merely holding the baby for Mrs. Munday, when it was awake and would not lie in its cradle, and doing for her the "little odd turns," at first contemplated, so as to enable her the better to get

through the work of the family, the former at once began to play the lady, and to require of Anna not only the performance of a great deal of household labour, but to wait on her in many instances where the service was almost superfluous.

When Mr. Munday came home at supper time, he found his wife with a book in her hand. The table was set, the fire burning cheerfully, and the hearth swept up. The baby was asleep in its cradle, and, as Mrs. Munday read, she now and then touched gently with her foot the rocker. This he observed through the window, without himself being seen. He then glanced into the kitchen. The kettle had been taken from the fire—the tea-pot was on the hearth, flanked on one side by a plate of toast, and on the other by a dish containing some meat left from dinner which had been warmed over. These would have quickened his keen appetite, but for another vision. On her knees, in the middle of the room, was Anna, slowly, and evidently in a state of exhaustion, scrubbing the floor. Her face, which happened to be turned toward him, looked worn and pale, and he saw at a glance her red eyes, and the tears upon her cheeks. While he yet gazed upon her, she paused in her work, straightened her little form with a wearied effort, and clasping both hands across her forehead, lifted her wet eyes upward. There was no motion of her wan lips, but Mr. Munday knew that her heart, in its young sorrow, was raised to heaven. At this moment, the kitchen door was opened, and Mr Munday saw his wife enter.

"Eye-service!" said she, severely, as she saw

the position of Anna. "I don't like this. Not half over the floor yet! Why, what have you been doing?"

The startled child bent quickly to her weary task, and scrubbed with a new energy imparted by fear. Mr. Munday turned, heart sick, from the window, and entered their little sitting-room as his wife came in from the kitchen. She met him with a pleasant smile, but he was grave and silent.

"Don't you feel well?" she inquired, with a look of concern.

"Not very well," he answered, evasively.

"Have you felt bad all day?"

"Yes. But I am heart sick now."

"Heart sick! What has happened, Abraham?" Mrs. Munday looked slightly alarmed.

"One whom I thought full of human-kindness has been oppressive, and even cruel."

"Abraham! What do you mean?"

"Perhaps my eyes deceived me!" he answered—"perhaps it was a dream. But I saw a sight just now to make the tears flow."

And as Mr. Munday spoke, he took his wife by the arm and led her out through the back door.

"Look!" said he—"there is a poor, motherless child, scarcely a year older than our Aggy!"

Anna had dropped her brush again, and her pale face and tearful eyes were once more uplifted. Was it only a delusion of fancy, or did Mrs. Munday really see the form of Mrs. Barrow, stooping over her suffering child, as if striving to clasp her in her shadowy arms?

For a few moments, the whole mind of Mrs. Mun-

day was in a whirl of excitement. Then stepping back from the side of her husband, she glided through the open door, and was in the kitchen ere Anna had time to change her position. Frightened at being found idle again, the poor child caught eagerly at the brush which lay on the floor. In doing so she missed her grasp, and weak and trembling from exhaustion, fell forward, where she lay motionless. When Mrs. Munday endeavoured to raise her up, she found her insensible.

"Poor—poor child!" said Mr. Munday, tenderly, his voice quivering with emotion, as he lifted her in his arms. He bore her up to the children's chamber, and laid her on the bed.

"Not here," said Mrs. Munday. "Up in her own room."

"She is one of God's children, and as precious in his sight as ours"—almost sobbed the husband, yet with a rebuking sternness in his voice. "She shall lie here!"

Mrs. Munday was not naturally a cruel woman; but she loved her own selfishly; and the degree in which this is done, is the measure of disregard toward others. She forgot, in her desire for service, that her little servant was but a poor, motherless child, thrust out from the parent nest, with all the tender longings of a child for love, and all its weaknesses and want of experience. She failed to remember, that in the sight of God all children are equally precious.

But the scales fell from her eyes. She was rebuked, humbled, and repentant.

"Anna must go back to her aunt," said Mr.

Munday, after the child had recovered from her brief fainting fit, and calmness was once more restored to the excited household.

"She must remain," was the subdued, but firm answer. "I have dealt cruelly with her. Let me have opportunity to repair the wrong she has suffered. I will try to think of her as my own child. If I fail in that, the consciousness of her mother's presence will save me from my first error."

And Anna did remain—continuing to be Mrs. Munday's little maid of all work. But her tasks, though varied, were light. She was never again overburdened, but treated with a judicious kindness that won her affections, and made her ever willing to render service to the utmost of her ability.

LOOK AT THE BRIGHT SIDE.

How rarely is an absent one mentioned with commendation, that a fault of character is not immediately set forth to qualify the good impressions. "Mr. A—— is a man of fine talents, you say;" and forthwith is responded, "O yes, a man of fine talents, but he has no control over his passions." "Mr. B—— is a man of excellent principles." "But," is answered, "I don't like some of his practices." "Mr. C—— is a kind father and husband." "But if all I have heard be true, he is not over-nice in regard to his word." And, ten chances to one,

if the commendation is not forgotten, while the disparaging declarations find a prominent place in the memories of all who heard them, and colour their estimation of A——, B——, and C——.

It is remarked by Swedenborg, that whenever the angels come to any one, they explore him in search of good. They see not his evil, but his good qualities; and, attaching themselves to these, excite them into useful activities. Were they to see only the man's evils, they would recede from him, for they could not conjoin themselves to these; and thus man would be left unaided, to be borne down by the powers of evil.

If, then, we would help our fellow-man to rise above what is false and evil in his character, let us turn our eyes, as far as possible, away from his faults, and fix them steadily upon his good qualities. We shall then aid him in the upward movement, and give external power to the good he really pos sesses. And now, by way of illustration.

A young man, named Westfield, was the subject of conversation between three or four persons. One of them, a Mr. Hartman, had met Westfield only recently. The first impression formed of his character was quite favourable, and he expressed himself accordingly. To his surprise and pain, one of the company remarked:

"Yes, Westfield is clever enough in his way, but—." And he shrugged his shoulders, and looked a world of mystery.

"No force of character," said another.

"I have never liked the way he treated Mr. Green," said a third. "It shows, to my mind, a

defect of principle. The young man is well enough in his way, I suppose, and I wouldn't say a word against him for the world, but——"

And he shrugged his shoulders. Ah, how much wrong has been done to character and worldly prospects by a single shrug!

From no lip present came even the smallest word in favour of the young man. No one spoke of the disadvantages against which he had struggled successfully, nor portrayed a single virtue of the many he possessed. No one looked at the brighter qualities of his mind. And why? Poor, weak human nature! Quick to mark evils and defects, but slow to acknowledge what is good in thy neighbour. Prone to flatter self, yet offering only extorted praise at the shrine of another's merit. How low art thou fallen!

A few evenings after the little conversation we have mentioned, Mr. Hartman was thrown in company with Westfield. The latter, remembering his first interview with this gentleman, whose position in society was one of standing and influence, met him again with a lively glow of satisfaction, which showed itself in countenance and manner. But the few disparaging words spoken against the young man had poisoned the mind of Mr. Hartman; and, instead of meeting him with the frank cordiality expected, he received him with a cold repulse.

Disappointed and mortified, Westfield turned from the man toward whom warm feelings and hopeful thoughts had been going forth for many days, and, in a little while, quietly retired from a com-

pany, in mingling with which he had promised himself both pleasure and profit.

"That hope blasted!" exclaimed the young man, striking his hands together, while a shadow of intense pain darkened his countenance. He was now alone, having returned to his chamber for self-communion.

There existed, at this time, an important crisis in the young man's affairs. He was a clerk, on a very moderate salary. His own wants were few, and these his salary would have amply supplied; but a widowed mother and a young sister looked to him as their only support. To sustain all, was beyond his ability; and, much to his anxiety and deep discouragement, he found himself falling into debt. His offence toward Mr. Green, which had been alluded to as involving something wrong on his part, was nothing more nor less than leaving his service for that of another man, who made a small advance in his salary—a thing which the former positively refused to do. He had been with Mr. Green from his boyhood up, and somehow or other, Mr. Green imagined that he possessed certain claims to his continued service; and when the fact of Westfield's having left him was alluded to, gave to others the impression that he was badly used in the matter. He did not mean to injure the young man; but he had been valuable; the loss fretted him and produced unkind feelings—and these found relief in words. Selfishness prevented him from seeing, as he ought to have seen, the bright side of Westfield's character, and so he injured him by throwing a shadow on his good name.

"That hope blasted!" repeated the unhappy young man.

And what was this fondly cherished hope, the extinguishment of which had moved him so deeply? A few words will explain. Mr. Hartman was a man of considerable wealth, and had just closed a large contract with the State for the erection of certain public works, to be commenced immediately. On that very day Westfield had learned the fact that he was quietly in search of a competent, confidential, disbursing clerk, whose salary would be double what he was receiving; and it was his purpose to see him immediately, offer himself, and endeavour, if possible, to secure the situation. He had called at his office twice during the day, but failed to see him. The manner in which Mr. Hartman met his advances in the evening, satisfied him that to ask for the situation so much desired would be altogether vain.

Westfield was a young man of integrity—competent in business matters, and industrious. He had his faults and his weaknesses, as we all have; but these were greatly overbalanced by his virtues. Yet was he not above temptation. Who is? Who has not some easily besetting sin? Who can say that he may not fall?

To Mr. Hartman, as a private clerk, Westfield would have been invaluable. He was just the kind of a man he was in search of. Moreover, he was thinking of him for this very position of private clerk, when the poison of ill-natured detraction entered his mind, and he turned his thoughts away from him.

The more he brooded over his disappointment, and pondered the unhappy condition of his affairs, the more deeply did the mind of Westfield become disturbed.

"I cannot bear these thoughts," he said, starting up from a chair in which he had been sitting in gloomy despondency, and, in the effort to escape his troubled feelings, he went forth upon the street. It was late in the evening. There was no purpose in the young man's mind as he walked square after square with hasty steps; and he was about returning, when he was met by a man with whom he had a slight acquaintance, and who seemed particularly well pleased to see him.

"The very man I was thinking about," said Mr. Lee—that was his name. "Quite a coincidence. Which way are you going?"

"Home," replied Westfield, somewhat indifferently.

"In any particular hurry?"

"No."

"Come with me then!".

"Where are you going?"

"To the Union House. There's to be a raffle there at ten o'clock, for six gold watches—chance in each watch only one dollar. I've got five chances. They are splendid watches. Come along and try your luck."

"I don't care if I do," said Westfield.

He was ready to catch at almost any thing that would divert his mind. Under other circumstances this would have been no temptation. So he went to the Union Hotel, ventured a dollar, and, most

unexpectedly, became the owner of a gold watch. New thoughts and new feelings were stirring in his mind as he took his way homeward that night, excited as well by some things seen and heard at the Union House, as by the good fortune which had attended his first venture of a small sum of money in the hope of gaining largely on the deposit.

The effect of his cold treatment of Westfield, did not escape the observation of Mr. Hartman. He saw that the young man was both hurt and troubled—that he kept aloof from the rest of the company, and soon retired.

"Do you know young Westfield?" he inquired of a gentleman with whom, some time afterward, he happened to be in conversation.

"Very well," was the answer.

"Has he good business capacity?"

"Few young men excel him."

"Do you know any thing of his character?"

"It stands fair."

"I have heard that he did not treat his former employer, Mr. Green, very well."

"He left him for a higher salary; and, as he has a mother and sister to support, he was bound, in my opinion, to seek the largest possible return for his labour."

"Had Green no particular claim on him?"

"No more than you or I have."

"I heard the fact of his leaving the employment of Mr. Green commented on in a way that left on my mind an unfavourable impression of the young man."

"Some people are always more ready to sup-

pose evil than good of another," was replied to this.

"I am in search of a competent young man as a private clerk, and had thought of Westfield; but these disparaging remarks caused me to decide against him."

"In my opinion," said the gentleman with whom Mr. Hartman was conversing, "you will search a good while before finding any one so well suited to your purpose, in every respect, as young Westfield."

"You speak earnestly in regard to him."

"I do, and because I know him well."

A very different impression of the young man was now entertained by Mr. Hartman. It was past eleven o'clock on that night as he rode homeward, passing on his way the Union House, and just at the moment when Westfield, in company with several young men, came forth after the closing of the raffle. They were talking loud and boisterously. Mr. Hartman leaned from the carriage window, attracted by the voices, and his eyes rested for a moment on Westfield. The form was familiar, but he failed to get a sight of his face. The carriage swept by, and the form passed from his vision; but he still thought of it, and tried to make out his identity.

Not many hours of tranquil sleep had Westfield that night. As he lay awake through the silent watches, temptation poured in upon him like a flood, and pressing against the feeble barriers of weakened good principles, seemed ready to bear them away in hopeless ruin. In a single hour he

had become the possessor of a gold watch, which could readily be converted into money, and which, at a low valuation, would bring the sum of fifty dollars,—equal to a month's salary. How easily had this been acquired! True, to raffle was to gamble. And yet he easily silenced this objection; for at religious fairs he had often seen goods disposed of by raffle, and had himself more than once taken a chance. Another raffle for valuable articles had been announced for the next night at the Union, and Westfield, urged by the hope of new successes, resolved to be present, and again try his luck.

The following morning found the young man in a more sober, thoughtful mood. He did not show his watch to his mother, nor mention to her the fact of having won it. Indeed, when she asked him where he had been so late on the night before, he evaded the question.

On his way to the store in which he was employed, Westfield called in at a jeweller's, and asked the value of his watch.

"It is worth about seventy-five dollars," answered the jeweller, looking very earnestly at Westfield, and with a certain meaning in his countenance that the young man did not like.

"It is perfectly new, as you can see. I would like to sell it."

"What do you ask for it?"

"I will take sixty dollars."

"I'll buy it for fifty," said the jeweller.

"Very well, it is yours."

Westfield felt like a guilty man. He was certain that the jeweller suspected him of having

obtained it through some improper means. The money was paid over at once, and thrusting the sum into his pocket, he went hurriedly out. As he was leaving the store, he encountered Mr. Hartman, who was entering. He dropped his eyes to the ground, while a crimson flush overspread his face.

"Ah, Mr. Westfield," said Mr. Hartman, detaining him, "I am glad to meet you. Will you call at my office this morning?"

"If you wish me to do so," replied the young man, struggling to overcome the confusion of mind into which the sudden encounter, under the circumstance, had thrown him.

"I do. Call at eleven o'clock—I wish to see you particularly."

"Do you know that young man?" inquired the jeweller, as Mr. Hartman, to whom he was well known, presented himself at his counter.

"What young man?" inquired Mr. Hartman.

"The young man with whom I saw you speaking at the door."

"Yes. His name is Westfield; and a very excellent young man he is. Do you know any thing about him?"

"I know that he has just sold me a watch for fifty dollars, which I sold for seventy-five yesterday to a man who told me he was going to raffle it."

The jeweller didn't *say* this. It came in his thoughts to say it. But he checked the utterance, and merely replied:

"Nothing at all. He is a stranger to me."

Had that first impulse to produce an unfavourable

impression in regard to a stranger, been obeyed, the life prospects of Westfield would have been utterly blasted. The evening that followed, instead of finding him at home, rejoicing with his mother and sister over the hopeful future, would have seen him again in the dangerous company of unscrupulous men, and entering in through the gate that leads to destruction. Now he saw clearly his error, the danger he had escaped, and wondered at his blind infatuation, while he shuddered at the fearful consequences that might have followed, had not a better way opened to his erring footsteps at the very moment when, in strange bewilderment, he was unable to see the right path.

Mr. Hartman never had cause to regret his choice of a clerk. He often thought of the injustice which the young man had suffered at the hands of those who should have seen his good qualities, instead of seeking for and delighting in the portrayal of bad ones. And he thought, too, of the actual injury this false judgment had come near inflicting upon a most worthy, capable, and honest person. He did not know all. The reader can penetrate more deeply below the surface, and see how a few carelessly-uttered disparaging words, proved hidden rocks, on which the hopes of a fellow-being, for this life and the next, came near being wrecked.

WHAT HAPPENED TO JOE BARKER.

"Don't go out, Joe," said Mrs. Barker, as she saw her husband take his hat and move off quietly toward the door.

"I'm not going to stay long."

And as Barker said this, he glided from the room. Mrs. Barker followed quickly, with the purpose of arresting his progress and bringing him back into the house.

Now, Joe Barker was a very weak-minded man; one of those innocent, harmless creatures, who are their own worst enemies, and, as a matter of course, enemies to the peace of all with whom they have intimate relations. He was very good-natured, even when in liquor; and, what is more remarkable still, good-natured under the sharp words of his not over-patient wife, who never failed in her duty toward him, so far as reproof and angry invective were concerned. There was no lack of occasion for these, in the almost daily defections of Barker, whose temperance resolutions, when in sight of a dram-shop, were strong as threads of wax in a furnace heat.

Mrs. Barker, as just said, followed quickly, in order to intercept her husband's movements. She knew very well for what purpose he was going out after supper. There was only one attraction

stronger than home for him, and that was the tavern. When Mrs. Barker passed forth and stretched out her hands to grasp the form of her weak husband, she clutched but the empty air. Anticipating this very movement, Joe had sprung away with nimble feet the instant the door was closed behind him; and was far beyond the reach of his wife's intercepting hands when she made her appearance.

"Isn't it too much?" exclaimed Mrs. Barker, as she went back into the house, after satisfying herself that Joe was fairly beyond her reach. "He's got his whole week's wages in his pockets, and ten to one if he doesn't get rid of nearly half of it before he comes home. I wish every tavern in the State was burned down, and every tavern-keeper in the penitentiary—and it would be so before long, if I had my way! It's no better than robbery to take the money of a half-innocent like him. If I had only been in time to stop him and get his money out of his pocket!"

Mrs. Barker was both vexed and grieved; so much so, that she sat down and wept.

In the mean time her husband made his way to the nearest tavern, which was not very far off. Poor Joe Barker! The words of his wife, when she called him a "half-innocent," nearly expressed the truth. His intellectual range was very low. He could read—early drilling in the district school had accomplished for him that much—but his ability to read was rarely put to any good use. Newspapers he saw now and then at the tavern, but he never found much in them beyond a vulgar anecdote that interested him. Of the history of current events,

he did not understand sufficient to encourage thought in that direction. In fact, general knowledge as to what was passing in the great world around him, was as much hidden from his dull eyes as if it were in a sealed book. He worked at his trade, that of a cooper, very much as a horse goes round in a mill. He had learned how to make a barrel, somewhat indifferently; and daily, when not too much overcome with drink, he sat on the wooden-horse in the old cooper shop, deliberately working his drawing-knife —or arranged the staves in form, and bound them with hoops. He had no need of intellectual skill to keep on with his tasks. He knew how to make a barrel, and that was about the extent of his knowledge in mechanical science. His earnings ranged from two-and-a-half to five dollars a week, but never went beyond the last-mentioned sum. Too large a proportion of this found its way into the landlords' tills, much to the injury of Joe Barker and his miserable family. Strong liquor on so weak a brain made it only the weaker; and the poor innocent, when sober, was little removed from a good-natured fool when drunk.

It was all in vain that Betsy Barker, his faithful, though long-suffering, and often justly indignant wife, went many times to the tavern-keepers who sold him drink, and implored them, with tears, in the name of God and humanity, not to sell her husband intoxicating drinks. Coarse insult or wicked abuse was all she received—and she would go back, weeping and despairing, to her cheerless home and half-starving children.

Thus it was with Joe Barker and his family on

the night in which we have introduced them to the reader. What was a little unusual for Joe, he had worked steadily all day, and without once going to the tavern to get a drink. In fact, Betsy had talked to him so earnestly in the morning, and pictured to his mind so vividly the evil consequences of his way of life, that he had made one of his feeble resolutions to become a sober man. This resolution he had been able to keep through the day, sustained therein by the useful labour in which he was engaged. But, when evening came in, and his thought went to the tavern and the good fellows there assembled, with whom he was wont to meet, he was unable to withstand the impulse that led him thitherward. And so, seizing a favoured moment, he left the house, ere his watchful partner could prevent it.

Diving down a narrow cross street, not far from the poor hovel in which he dwelt, Joe Barker was soon in front of "The Diamond," an old drinking haunt of the worst description. He was right against the closed door ere he noticed the absence of the red lamp, on which the word "Refectory" had so often tempted him with thoughts of good cheer within; and he pushed several times against the door, ere fully satisfied that it was fastened within.

"What's the matter here?" muttered Joe, in some bewilderment at so singular a state of affairs. Stepping back a pace or two, he looked up at the house. "Lamp out—door locked—shutters closed —what's the matter?—old Gilbert's not dead, I hope."

Two or three feeble raps were made on the door, but only a hollow sound came from within.

"I don't understand it all," said Joe Barker, now observing, for the first time, that this particular neighbourhood, usually crowded, so to speak, with noisy tipplers every evening, had a deserted look. Here and there a man might be seen moving briskly along, as if on some particular errand, or on his way home. But there were no groups at the corners, no loud talkers: none of the usual evidences of drinking and rowdyism.

"It can't be Sunday evening," thought Joe; and he stood still, trying to think, with his hand on his forehead.

No; it was not Sunday evening, he was certain of this; for he remembered that "The Diamond" had always been ready to receive customers—whether it were Saturday or Sunday evening.

"He's dead, or moved away." This was the only conclusion to which Joe could arrive. So he passed on, saying to himself—

"I'll go round to Sprigg's; for I must have a drink to-night."

And so the poor, meagrely-clad creature went shuffling along the half-deserted pavement, where, aforetime, he had been wont to meet at every turn, wretches sold to the vice of intoxication, and even more degraded than himself. But few of these were now to be seen, and they were evidently as much bewildered at the changed aspect which every thing wore as he was.

Sprigg kept a drinking and gambling den, in the next square from Gilbert's. Thither Joe Barker groped his way, for the street was unusually dark—the large lamp in front of "The Diamond," now

extinguished, had, of itself, lit up the whole block. Stranger still! Sprigg's den was closed. A dim light, shining through one of the upper windows, encouraged Barker to hammer on the shut door for admittance. Two or three times he knocked before there was any evidence of life within. Then a window in the second story was opened, and a man's head thrust out.

"Who's there?" was growled in a gruff, almost angry voice.

"Hey! Sprigg, is that you?" cried Barker. "What, in wonder, is the matter?"

"Who are you, and what do you want?" returned Sprigg sharply.

"I'm Joe Barker; come down and let me in. I want the stiffest glass of rum-toddy you can make; for I havn't tasted a drop since yesterday."

"If I do come down, it'll be a sorry time for you, old chap!" was the passionate answer of Sprigg. "Off with you, and this instant!"

"Why, what's in the wind now, neighbour?" said Barker, more puzzled than before. "Have you all shut up shop—turned pious, and joined the church?"

The tavern-keeper sputtered out an oath, as he drew in his head, and closed the sash with a heavy jar.

Joe Barker was mystified worse than ever. What could it all mean?

"Somebody must be dead." He looked for a strip of crape; but the old iron latch-guard was guiltless of the drapery of mourning. A wooden block stood by the door, and upon this Barker sat

down to think, if his mental processes could thus be dignified.

"The 'Diamond' and Sprigg's, both shut up! Can't make it out. Is the world coming to an end? May be somebody's murdered; and they're been closed by the police? Shouldn't wonder! They say Sprigg is a bad fellow; and that Gilbert was once tried for his life. That's it, as sure as a gun! I'll go right off to Paul Dixon's. They'll know all about it, there."

Paul Dixon was another grog-seller, whose bar-room was close by, around the corner. Thither Joe directed his steps, impelled as much by an awakened curiosity as by an all-consuming thirst. Wonder of wonders! All was dark and silent in the neighbourhood of Paul Dixon's. Even the great lamp, with its stained glass sides, and variegated letters, had been taken down, and the bare lamp-post, as it stood sharp against the sky, added to the deserted aspect of things, so new, and strange, and unaccountable.

"Something's wrong," murmured Joe Barker, in a subdued voice. "Something's to pay." He looked at the lamp-post, at the closed windows and door of Paul Dixon's tavern, and sighed. He really felt melancholy.

"I wish I had a good drink," he said, arousing himself. "I never was so dry in my life. I wonder if all the taverns are closed. Gilbert, Sprigg, and Dixon shut up! Can't make it out, no how."

Thus talking with himself, Joe commenced retracing his steps, but very slowly, his eyes cast down to the pavement. So lost was he in a be-

wildering maze of doubt and suggestion, that, ere aware of an obstruction in his path, he came suddenly, and with quite a shock, against a very sober, old-fashioned pump, that signified its consciousness of the assault, by rattling somewhat noisily the chain of its iron ladle.

"Hi! hi! what's the matter now?" ejaculated Barker, moving back a pace or two, and trying to relink the broken chain of his thoughts. "Only the old pump! Aha! I've had many a cool drink here, in my time, both as boy and man; and it never cost me a cent, nor made me more of a fool than some people say I am by nature. Good evening, Mr. Pump! Let us shake hands, or shake handle, just as you please, for old acquaintance' sake. I've been trying to get a drink for this half hour. But not a drop is to be had for love or money. The rum-sellers have all shut up shop, it seems. I hope *you're* not on a strike, too. Let's see!"

Joe Barker lifted the handle, putting the iron ladle under the spout as he did so, and brought it down with a strong jerk. Out gushed the crystal water, looking clear and beautiful even in the feeble starlight. It filled the ladle, overrun its sides, and went splashing down upon the pavement. There was something pleasant in the sound, even to the dull ears of Barker; and there was a feeble awakening in his mind of dear old memories about boyhood, and the early times when he was a better man than now.

To his mouth he placed the brimming ladle, and drank a pure draught of nectar. Just as he had removed the vessel from his lips, and taken a deep

inspiration, a hand was laid on his shoulder familiarly, and a friendly voice said—

"Cheaper drinking that, neighbour Barker, than ever was found at the 'The Diamond,' across yonder, and a thousand times better into the bargain. I'm glad to see you returning to your old friend again, and hope you may never have occasion to desert him. Friend Pump is worth a score of your Spriggs, Dixons, and Gilberts. What a blessed thing that you are for ever rid of their friendly offices!"

"For ever rid of them?" said Barker. "What does it all mean, neighbour? What have they done? Has any one been murdered?"

'Murdered! No, not exactly that; but, didn't you know that the old villain Alcohol died last night."

"Died? What! I don't understand." And poor Joe Barker looked more bewildered than ever. "Died—how?"

"Why, Joe Barker! Is it possible you don't know that the Maine Law went into operation in our State to-day?"

"The Maine Law!" Joe took off his old hat, and laid one of his broad hands upon his forehead. "The Maine Law! I heard 'em talking about it on last election. They said it was a dreadful outrage upon our liberties, over at 'The Diamond,' and so I voted against it. What does it do, neighbour? Will it shut up all the taverns?"

"That's just what it has done already. You can't buy a drink of liquor in the whole town."

"You don't tell me! Good, say I to that! Well, I couldn't make it out, no how. I thought something strange had happened. All shut up?

Ho, ho! Sprigg said it would be the ruination of the town if the law passed. I rather guess he thought there was nobody in town left to be ruined except rum-sellers. And you're sure every tavern has been closed?"

"I know it," was the decided answer.

"Then I'll run home and tell Betsy. But won't she be glad!"

And away the excited creature ran, as fast as his feet would carry him.

Poor Betsy Barker! When she found that Joe had gone off, with all his week's wages in his pocket, she felt like giving up. They were out of meal and meat, and the children's shoes no longer kept their feet from the ground. For herself, she had not a garment but what was patched and repatched until scarcely a whole breadth of the original fabric remained. She had laid it all out in her mind, how she was going to spend the four dollars which her husband told her, in the morning, he would be paid for his week's work. It was a very small sum when set off against their many, many needs; but she had apportioned it, in her thought, in such a way as to make it go the farthest in supplying things absolutely necessary. But, alas! alas! Joe had gone off with the whole sum in his pocket, and she knew the chances were ten to one that he would not have the half of it left—perhaps not a dollar—when he came home.

The poor wife was disheartened, and who can wonder? She cleared off the supper things, and then sat down to mend an old jacket belonging to her oldest boy. As she turned it over and over,

and noticed how torn and worn it was—more fit for the rag-bag than any thing else—she let it fall into her lap, and, bending over upon the table by which she was sitting, buried her face in her arms. She did not weep now. Her feelings of despondency had in them too much of hopelessness for tears.

As she sat thus, the door opened, and her quick ears recognised the footsteps of her husband. Her heart fluttered instantly with a new hope, while half the oppressive weight on her bosom was removed. His return, so early and so unexpectedly, was an augury of good. That he had been drinking, she doubted not; but there was ground for believing that he had not wasted the money she so much needed. She did not raise her head until Joe came up to where she was sitting, and, in a tone of exultation, which he could not repress, exclaimed—

"Hurrah, Betsy! Good news! There's all my money—not a cent gone." And he threw a handful of silver coin on the table. "Good news! What do you think? Old King Alcohol's dead. I've just heard the news."

"Are you crazy, Joe?" said Mrs. Barker, looking in wonder and bewilderment at her excited husband.

"Not a bit of it, darling!" answered Joe, as he threw his arms around his wife's neck, and kissed her. "Nor drunk, either," he added, as she pushed him away. "Why, Betsy! Don't you know that we've got a Maine Law? I've been to Gilbert's, and to Sprigg's, and to Dixon's, but they're all shut up. Tompkins told me that a drop of liquor couldn't be bought in the whole town. Ain't that good news

for you, old girl! Hurrah, boys! I'm as glad as if I'd found a new dollar. I never could pass their doors without going in for a drink, whether I wanted to or not. Somehow or other, I couldn't help it."

"Joe! Joe! *Is* all true what you say?" eagerly exclaimed Mrs. Barker, now pressing forward upon her husband, and drawing, almost involuntarily, her arms around him. "*Is it all true, Joe?*"

"Every word of it, Betsy, as I'm a living man."

"Thank God! Thank God!" was the overjoyed wife's sobbing response, as her face fell upon the bosom of her kind-hearted, but weak and erring husband.

A month from that time, and what a change was visible in their humble dwelling! And not in theirs alone, but in thousands of other dwellings throughout the State from which prompt legislation had driven the vile traffic in rum, with all its attendant crime and wretchedness.

GOING TO THE DOGS.

"I RECEIVED your bill to-day, Mr. Leonard," said a customer, as he entered the shop of A master mechanic.

"We are sending out our accounts at this season," returned the mechanic, bowing.

"I want to pay you."

"Very well, Mr. Baker, we're always glad to get money."

"But you must throw off something. Let me see,"—and the customer drew out the bill—"twenty-seven dollars and forty-six cents. Twenty-five will do. There, receipt the bill and I'll pay you."

But Leonard shook his head.

"I can't deduct a cent from that bill, Mr. Baker. Every article is charged at our regular price."

"Oh yes, you can. Just make it twenty-five dollars, even money. Here it is," and Baker counted out the cash.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Baker, but I cannot afford to deduct any thing. If you'd only owed me twenty-five dollars, your bill would have been just that amount. I would not have added a cent beyond what was due, nor can I take any thing less than my own."

"Then you won't deduct the odd money?"

"I cannot, indeed."

"Very well." The manner of the customer changed. He was evidently offended. "The bill is too high by just the sum I asked to have stricken off. But no matter, I can pay it."

"Then you mean to insinuate," said the mechanic, who was an independent sort of a man, "that I am cheating you out of two dollars and forty-six cents?"

"I didn't say so."

"But it is plain that you think so, or you wouldn't have asked an abatement. If you considered my charges just, you wouldn't dispute them."

"Oh, never mind, never mind! we'll not waste

words about it. Here's your money, said Mr Baker; and he added another five-dollar bill to the sum he had laid down. The mechanic receipted the account and gave the change, both of which his customer thrust into his pocket with a petulant air, and then turned and left the store without another word.

"It's the last bill he ever has against me," muttered Baker to himself, as he walked away. "If that's his manner of treating customers, he'll soon go to the dogs. He was downright insulting, and no gentleman will stand that from another, much less from a vulgar mechanic. Mean to insinuate! Humph! Yes, I did mean to insinuate!" and Mr. Baker involuntarily quickened his pace. "He'll soon go to the dogs. I've paid him a great deal of money, but it is the last dollar of mine he ever handles."

Baker was as good as his word. He withdrew his custom from the offending mechanic, and gave it to another.

"I've got one of your old customers, Leonard," said a friend in the same business to the mechanic, some six or eight months afterward.

"Ah! who is it?"

"Baker."

Leonard shrugged his shoulders.

"How came you to lose him?"

"I'll tell you how you can keep him."

"Well, how?"

"If your bill amounts to thirty dollars, make it thirty-three and a few odd cents, by increasing some of its items. He will want the surplus

knocked off, which you can afford to do; then he will pay it, and think you just the man for him."

"You lost him, then, because you wouldn't abate any thing from a true bill."

"I did."

"Thank you. But suppose my bill should be twenty-six, or seven, or eight: what then? I couldn't knock off the odd dollars for the purpose of making it even."

"No. In that case you must add until you get about thirty."

"And fall back to that?"

"Yes. It will be knocking off the odd dollars, which he will think clear gain."

"That would hardly be honest."

"Hardly. But you must do it, or lose his custom some day or other."

"I shall have to accommodate him, I suppose. If he will be cheated, it can't be helped."

On the very first bill that Baker paid to his new tradesman he obtained an abatement of one dollar and ninety cents odd money, but actually paid three dollars more than was justly due. Still he was very well satisfied, imagining that he had made a saving of one dollar and ninety cents. The not over-scrupulous tradesman laughed in his sleeve and kept his customer.

Having withdrawn his support from Leonard, it was the candid opinion of Mr. Baker that he was "going to the dogs," as he expressed it, about as fast as a man could go. He often passed the shop, but rarely saw a customer.

"No wonder," he would say to himself. "A man like him can't expect and doesn't deserve custom."

In the eyes of Baker, the very grass seemed to grow upon the pavement before the door of the declining tradesman. Dust settled thickly in his window, and the old sign turned grayer and grayer in the bleaching air.

"Going to the dogs, and no wonder," Baker would say to himself, as he went by. He appeared to take a strange interest in watching the gradual decay of the mechanic's fortunes. One day a mercantile friend said to him—

"Do you know any thing about this Leonard?"

"Why?" asked Baker.

"Because, he wants to make a pretty large bill with me."

"On time?"

"Yes, on the usual credit of six months."

"Don't sell him. Why, the man is going to the dogs at railroad speed."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, I'm looking every day to see him close up. He might have done well, for he understood his business. But he's so unaccommodating, and I may say insulting to his customers, that he drives the best ones away. I used to make large bills with him, but haven't dealt at his shop now for some time."

"Ah! I was not aware of that. I am glad I spoke to you, for I shouldn't like to lose six or seven hundred dollars."

"Six or seven hundred! Is it possible that he

wants to buy so recklessly! Take my advice, and don't think of trusting him."

"I certainly shall not."

When Leonard ordered the goods, the merchant declined selling except for cash.

"As you please," returned the mechanic indifferently, and went elsewhere and made his purchases.

It happened that Mr. Leonard had a very pretty and interesting daughter, on whose education the mechanic had bestowed great pains; and it also happened that Baker had a son who, in most things, was a "chip of the old block." Particularly was he like his father in his great love of money, and scarcely had he reached his majority, ere he began to look about him with a careful eye, to a good matrimonial arrangement, by which plenty of money would be secured.

Adelaide Leonard, on account of her beauty and accomplishments, was much caressed, and mingled free in society. Young Baker had met her frequently, and could not help being struck with her beauty, intelligence, and grace.

"There is a charm for you," said a friend to him one evening.

"In Miss Leonard?"

"Yes."

"She's a charming girl," replied the young man. "I wonder if her father is worth any thing?"

"People say so."

"Indeed."

"Yes. They say the old fellow has laid up something quite handsome; and as Adelaide is his only child, she will of course get it all."

"I was not aware of that."

"It is all so, I believe."

After this, young Baker was exceedingly attentive to Miss Leonard, and made perceptible inroads upon her heart. He even went so far as to visit pretty regularly at her house, and was meditating an avowal of his attachment, when his father said to him one day—

"What young lady was that I saw you with in the street yesterday afternoon?"

"Her name is Leonard."

"The daughter of old Leonard in —— street?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Baker looked grave, and shook his head.

"Do you know any thing about her?" asked the son.

"Nothing about her; but I know that her father is going to the dogs as fast as ever a man went."

"Indeed! I thought he was well off."

"Oh no, I've been looking to see his shop shut up, or to hear of his being sold out by the sheriff, every day, for these two years past."

"Miss Leonard is a very lovely girl."

"She's the daughter of a poor, vulgar mechanic. If you see any thing so very lovely in that, Henry, you have a strange taste."

"There is no gainsaying Adelaide's personal attractions," replied the son, "but if her father is poor, that settles the matter as far as she and I are concerned. I am glad you introduced the subject, for I might have committed myself, and when too late discovered my error."

"And a sad error it would have been, Henry. In any future matter of this kind, I hope you will be perfectly frank with me. I have a much more accurate knowledge of the condition and standing of people than you can possibly have."

The son promised to do as his father wished. From that time the visits to Miss Leonard were abated, and his attentions to her, when they met in society, became coldly formal. The sweet young girl, whose feelings had really been interested, felt the change, and was for a time unhappy; but in a few months she recovered herself, and was again as bright and cheerful as usual.

Time went steadily on, sweeping down one and setting up another, and still old Leonard didn't go to the dogs, much to the surprise of Baker, who could not imagine how the mechanic kept his head above water after having driven away his best customers, as he must long since have done, if all were treated as he had been. But he was satisfied of one thing, at least, and that was that the mechanic must be miserably poor, as he, in fact, deserved to be, according to his idea of the matter.

One day, about a year after his timely caution to his son in regard to Miss Leonard, Baker happened to pass along a street where he had not been for some months. Just opposite a large, new, and beautiful house, to which the painters were giving their last touches, he met a friend. As they passed, Baker said—

"That's an elegant house. It has been built since I was in this neighbourhood."

"Yes, it is a very fine house, and I suppose didn't cost less than fifteen thousand dollars."

"No, I should think not. Who built it? Do you know?"

"Yes. It was built by Leonard."

"By whom?" Baker looked surprised.

"By old Leonard. You know him."

"Impossible! He's not able to build a house like that."

"Oh yes, he is, and a half a dozen more, if necessary."

"Leonard!"

"Certainly. Why, he's worth at least seventy thousand dollars."

"You must be in error."

"No. His daughter is to be married next month to an excellent young man, and this house has been built and is to be handsomely furnished as a marriage present."

"Incredible! I thought he was going or had gone to the dogs long ago."

"Leonard!" The friend could not help laughing aloud. "He go to the dogs. Oh, no. There isn't a man in his trade that does so good a business, as little show as he makes. Good work, good prices, and punctuality are the cardinal virtues of his establishment, and make all substantial. How in the world could you take up such a notion?"

"I don't know, but such has been my impression for a long time," replied Baker, who felt exceedingly cut down on account of the mistake he had made, and particularly so in view of the elegant house and seventy thousand dollars, which might all

have belonged to his son, in time, if he had not fallen into such an egregious error about old Leonard.

So the world moves on. People are prone to think that what they smile on lives, and what they frown on is blighted and must die

---

ONE OF THE SOLVENT CLASS.

"Let him that standeth, take heed," &c.

"THERE'S been another 'burst up' in Pearl street," said Mr. B., entering the store of Mr. A., in Maiden Lane.

"Indeed! and who is it?" asked Mr. A., with his usual expression of concern, when he heard that a merchant of New York had made a failure of it.

"Eldridge, to be sure! Who would have dreamed that he was not sound at the core?"

"Not I, certainly. Nor do I believe a word of his real insolvency, if he *has* gone by the board. No—no! Old Eldridge is too shrewd a man to let his affairs become tangled."

"Then what *do* you think, Mr. A——?"

"Think? Why, I think there's something rotten in Denmark."

"You judge severely."

"I always suspect unfair play when such men as Mr. Eldridge fail."

"And he is the last man I would suspect," said Mr. B——.

"I've seen too much of the world, and am too old now to be humbugged," Mr. A—— replied, with a selfish grin.

"A meeting of creditors has been called for this morning, at eleven o'clock."

"There has! Well, as he's into me to the tune of some five or six thousand dollars, I shall most certainly be there."

"But before you come," said Mr. B——, "try to divest your mind of the idea of fraud, so that you can, with the rest of us, enter into a just and humane examination of his affairs."

"Pish! *Humane!* Yes, there it comes! That is the way! Whenever a man wants to tip over and pocket a few thousands that belong to his creditors, he gets some one to raise the cry of humanity. But it won't do for me, Mr. B——; I don't bite at such bait."

Indignant at the unfeeling insolence of the merchant, Mr. B—— turned away from him without replying, and left his store.

On the same morning, a scene was passing in one of the splendid dwellings in Mott street, that well might touch the heart. An elderly man was seated in the parlour, near the fire, lost in deep and painful thought; but neither of his three beautiful daughters, nor their mother, knew of what was in his mind.

Adeline, the eldest, was seated at the piano, endeavouring to perfect herself in a new and difficult piece of music; and Constance and Margaretta

were engaged in a conversation about a splendid *fete* to be given in Park Place, the invitations to which had that morning been handed in.

"Every thing, they say, is to be on a grand scale," remarked Constance.

"Too grand, I'm afraid," Margaretta replied, "for pleasure. But, I suppose, we will have to go."

"Of course, we will," said Constance. "It would never do to miss the most splendid 'come off,' as they call it, of the season."

"I wonder where these magnificent affairs will stop. None but millionaires can afford them.—High ho! I suppose, pa, we can't yet rank ourselves with that class," said the happy hearted girl, laughing as she turned toward her father.

"What did you say, Margaretta?" asked the latter, thus suddenly roused from his revery, while a shadow flitted over his countenance.

"I was saying, pa, that we could not yet rank ourselves with the millionaires," she replied, not observing the expression of his face.

The deep and almost convulsive sigh that followed this remark, and the evident pain it gave, arrested the attention of each one present, and they turned toward him with glances of anxious inquiry. A pause of a few moments followed, when the husband and father nerved himself to the task that had to be performed, and said, while his voice trembled—

"My dear children; and you, Anna, who have been with me in humble life as well as in affluence; I have sad news to tell, and it almost breaks my

heart to utter it. I am that thing of scorn and persecution, a broken merchant!"

Pale cheeks and tearful eyes followed this sudden, undreamed of announcement. And well they might, for such an event usually carries with it a degree of hopelessness that none can imagine but they who have experienced it.

"Were it not for you, my wife, and you, dear children, I should care but little," was at length said, and as this remark caused every eye again to seek the merchant's face, each was doubly pained to see tear after tear rolling over his cheeks, now browned and time-worn.

"Do not think of us, dear father!" said Adeline, instantly springing to his side, and drawing her arm round his neck. "Be your lot what it may, we will share it cheerfully."

"You know not what it is, my children, to be cast down, suddenly, from a place in society such as we have occupied. To be passed in the street by your former intimate friends, without notice. I know you cannot bear it!"

"Indeed, father, these things are nothing to us, in comparison with you and your happiness," said Margaretta and Constance, drying their tears and gathering around him, one with a hand in his, and the other leaning fondly on his shoulder. "For your sake, we will bear any thing."

"May heaven bless you, my dear children!" said the old man, fervently. "And I know it will bless you, for your pure affection. Only try to be patient and cheerful, and we may again hold up our heads."

"Trust us, dear father!" Adeline joined in saying. "If our cheerful endurance of any reverse that may come upon us, will strengthen your heart, then you need not despond."

The father bent his head, in silence, for a few moments, and then said, more calmly—

"Recent failures in the West have swept from me, suddenly, so large an amount of capital, that I can go on no longer in business; and I very much fear, from the standing of other country merchants who are indebted to my house largely, that I shall not only come out without a dollar, but be insolvent to a large amount. Thus, you see, that our fall will be low indeed."

"We would rather live in honourable and honest obscurity, and even poverty," said Constance, emphatically—"than move in princely splendour, were our father to act as some merchants, who have failed, and still retained all their former style of living, are said to have acted."

"Spoken like my own child!" the father answered, tenderly kissing her. "I fear your noble principles will soon receive a severe test."

"None of us will fail you, pa," the others added, smiling affectionately, though sadly. "We would be unworthy so good a father, did we shrink a moment from duty."

"This morning will fix our fate," said the merchant, rising. "My creditors meet at eleven o'clock, and there are those among them who know not the word 'mercy.' We will, without doubt, soon be stripped of every thing."

"Despair is never quite despair, pa," Adeline

said, holding his hand, and looking him encouragingly in the face.

"God bless you, my children!" was all the merchant could utter, as he lifted from the table a bundle of papers and hurried away.

Half an hour after, he entered a room over a broker's office in Wall street, where he found waiting for him twelve or fifteen men. Some of them received him kindly as he came in, but the majority regarded him with clouded brows, and some one or two with scowls of selfish malignancy.

"You know the object of this meeting, gentlemen," said he, after seating himself. "Here is a statement of my affairs."

"I never should have expected this from *you*, Mr. Eldridge," remarked one of the creditors, looking at him reproachfully.

"But, Mr. L——, I am not wilfully in this situation."

"No, of course not," Mr. L——, tossing his head significantly, replied,

"Oh, no—everybody who fails is the pink of honesty," broke in Mr. A——, with an angry glance at Eldridge.

"Mr. A——, I cannot permit such remarks," the debtor responded firmly.

"I wonder how you'll help it, sir," Mr. A—— said fiercely, springing to his feet, while his face grew dark with anger. "I never believe in your honest failures," he continued. "What right have you or any one else to risk my property? What"—

But he was cut short by a motion from an individual present, calling another to the chair. As

soon as the meeting was thus organized, Mr. A—— attempted to go on, but was compelled by the chairman to take his seat, which he did, muttering bitter invectives against the unfortunate debtor.

"And now," said the chairman of the meeting, "we should be pleased to have your statement, Mr. Eldridge."

The creditor then proceeded to submit a full history of his affairs. He was indebted, according to this, on all accounts, in the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. As an offset, his books showed as due him on merchandise, bills receivable, and claims in suit, two hundred thousand dollars, and he had, besides, property which had cost him forty thousand dollars. But of this fifty thousand dollars was known to be a dead loss, and nearly an equal sum, owing to the continued depression of business, was set down as "doubtful and desperate." The real estate would not now, if thrown into market, bring twenty thousand dollars. In closing this statement, he proposed to give up every thing into the hands of a trustee, provided each creditor would sign a release, and thus give him a chance to get on his feet again. On taking his seat, the first man who took the floor was Mr. A——.

"I see plain enough," said he, addressing the chairman of the meeting, "that here is to be another one of the many late attempts at wiping off all old scores. But I, for one, am determined that I will release no man. It's high time this system of releasing men was broken up. It's a premium on insolvency; or roguery, I should have said. If men knew that they would have to toe the mark up to

the last cent, there wouldn't be so many, who know nothing about doing business, rushing into its intricacies, dividing and sub-dividing it until it's good for nothing, and then taking in honest merchants. You'll never hear of me failing, sir. No—no. I belong to the solvent class!"

Here Mr. A——, whose idea of his belonging to the solvent class, when once expressed, so excited his selfish vanity, that he lost the thread of what he was going to say, had to sit down. Before he had time to recover his thoughts, another merchant present addressed the meeting.

"No one," said he, "could have been taken more by surprise than myself at learning that our friend Mr. Eldridge had been compelled to suspend. But my confidence in his integrity and honourable principle has been unbounded, and is unshaken now. A statement of his affairs shows conclusively the cause of his present embarrassment. There are four firms in the West, by which we all have suffered, that I find have broken in upon Mr. Eldridge's business to a very heavy amount. Most of us did not hesitate to sell them freely, and no one can blame him for doing the same. Besides this, he has been seriously involved in the numerous failures that have taken place in our own city. That he is unfortunate, is the hardest term we can apply to him; and, as such, he claims our sympathy and kind consideration. No one of us knows how soon he, from unforeseen causes, may be reduced to a like extremity. I most certainly go for releasing him."

"Let me beg the gentleman," said Mr. A——, rising hastily, and displaying much heat, "not to

include me among his prospective insolvents. I belong to the other class. I never expect to fail, and rob honest people of their rights. I do business on higher and better principles. No man has any right to fail! No man need fail who has common prudence and common honesty. He shall never have my name. He shall rot in a prison first. I'm determined to make an example of these kind of humbug merchants. Let them all be swept away, and then we shall have good times again—curse on them!"

"But you can gain nothing, Mr. A——, by such a course," the debtor said calmly. "I give you up all. Nor will I consider your release of me from legal obligations a moral exoneration. Only take off the manacles—give me a chance, and I may yet be able to pay even to the last cent."

"*Pish!*" was the creditor's sneering ejaculation. "Catch me such a fool as to trust to a broken merchant's honour. I've seen too many of the tribe."

"Shame! shame!" cried two or three voices.

Mr. A——'s face grew black with anger.

"You needn't try to operate on me, gentlemen," he said, in a loud, positive tone. "I am made of stuff not to be bent. I solemnly swear, that I will never release him, nor any of the rest of you either if you attempt to play the same game."

"Let us take the sense of the meeting," said one.

"The sense of the meeting," said another.

"Shall the sense of the meeting be taken?" asked the chairman.

"Ay"—"ay"—"ay," ran round the room, and the chairman said—

"All who are in favour of accepting an assignment of Mr. Eldridge's property, real and personal and then granting him a full release, will say Ay.

Many voices responded in the affirmative, and then the chairman put the negative.

"NO!" said Mr. A——, in a loud, positive voice—and "No"—"no"—"no," came from three others, but in tones far less emphatic.

"Now let us see how far the ayes and nays represent the amount claimed from Mr. Eldridge."

On examination, it was found that those who were in favour of accepting the assignment, and releasing the debtor, were creditors to the amount of one hundred and thirty thousand dollars, and the twenty thousand were due to those who refused to release him—six thousand of this to Mr. A——.

"To you, who have thus so kindly considered and felt for my painful situation," said Mr. Eldridge, "I must be permitted to express my deep gratitude—and of you who do not seem to regard me as honest, I must certainly beg a reconsideration of your present views. Unless you all agree, nothing, I fear, can be done. Even if a portion of you were to release me, how could I possibly bear up, without any money to sustain me, against the balance of the claims? I could not pay them."

"Suppose we adjourn the meeting until eleven o'clock to-morrow morning. Perhaps by that time those that object to the measure may think better of it," suggested one.

"Don't flatter yourself," said Mr. A——, sneeringly.

"I move that we adjourn until to-morrow morning at eleven o'clock," said Mr. B——.

The motion was seconded, and carried, and the meeting accordingly adjourned.

Mr. A—— walked down Wall street with a Mr. T——, also one of the objectors to the release.

"I don't know, Mr. A——," said the latter, "but I'm half inclined to think that I shall vote to-morrow for the release of Eldridge."

"You'll be a fool if you do, let me tell you that!" responded A——.

"I can't see any good that is to grow out of refusing."

"Can't you, indeed! Well, perhaps I can enlighten you a little."

"I wish you would—for light on the subject would certainly be very acceptable."

"It's the only way you will ever get the whole of your money."

"How can that be, when the debtor is insolvent?"

"If we positively refuse a compromise," said A——, "the rest of the creditors will buy us off. The estate, I am convinced, will pay seventy-five cents on the dollar. We would be entitled to that much any how; and for the sake of getting us to release old Eldridge, some of the very *humane* ones will propose to allow us our full claims, and the rest will come into it. That's the way I always do, and I get my full amount four times out of five."

"There is not much danger of you, I see," remarked T——.

"No, that there is not. I claim my own, and will have it. I'm one of the solvent ones, and can-

not sympathize with men who want to get off without paying their debts. There are two or three men among Eldridge's creditors who are a little ticklish; and they owe me. I want to let them see just what they have to expect."

"And what good will that do, Mr. A——?"

"A great deal. They'll take care to be off of my books before they knock under."

T—— parted with A—— under a high idea of his shrewdness, resolving to imitate so fair a specimen of a prudent and safe merchant.

"Well he may say that he belongs to the solvent class," he remarked to himself, as he walked musingly along. "It requires more shrewdness than I dreamed of to get on safely in these times."

At eleven o'clock on the next morning, the second meeting of creditors was held. The friends of the debtor had, in the mean time, been at work upon those who had refused on the day previous to sign off. All had agreed to the arrangement but A——, and his friend and protégé, T——. Them, neither argument nor persuasion could move. In vain did Eldridge represent to them his condition, stripped, prospectively, of every thing, and with a family raised amid plenty looking up to him for support.

"Surely, Mr. A——," he said, "misfortune is not crime."

"Every bankrupt speculator is criminal!" A—— responded, angrily.

"I deny the implied allegation. It is false, and basely so," Eldridge replied, his honest blood

aroused to indignation. "I never speculated to the amount of a single dollar!"

"Shame! shame! shame! None but a base wretch could thus insult the unfortunate!" were the responses which broke from many lips.

"Mr. Chairman," said one of the creditors, rising, "the claims of Mr. A—— and Mr. T—— amount to but eight thousand dollars. I propose that they be paid off in full, and that the rest of us take the assignment, and give Mr. Eldridge an honourable release. It will reduce our dividend but an unimportant trifle. You cannot choke them off in any other way. I know them, and I think we all know them."

"I am as anxious as any one to see Mr. Eldridge here, whom we all know to be honest and honourable, released; but I have no idea of rewarding unfeeling cupidity in the way you propose," said another.

"But there is no way of avoiding it, unless we punish the innocent with the guilty."

"That is the difficulty," replied the other, musing. "Well," he continued, "I suppose there is no help for it. I shall have to waive my objections."

The matter was now put to vote, and they decided to accept the assignment, and pay off in full the two obstinate creditors.

No one can imagine, but he who has passed through a like scene of trial, how much of suffering was condensed into the few days that elapsed from the time Mr. Eldridge became conscious of his inability to continue his business, until every thing was settled, and he thrown, at the age of fifty,

penniless upon the world. Not that he shrunk back in painful dread at the prospect before him and his family, but from the sickening consciousness that he could not, and might never be able to pay others their just dues—from the instinctive repugnance he had to meet face to face those whom he owed, and say to them, "I cannot pay my obligations!" Every one, he thought, must blame him. Even those who befriended and stood by him, must, he felt, because they were sufferers, entertain something of a distrust toward him. All this was agony to a mind like his; but he nerved himself for the time, and happily passed through it.

After every thing was fairly arranged, and the creditors, with consideration and humanity, had voluntarily agreed to let him retain the furniture in his house, he came home, and calling his family around him, said—

"Now, my dear children, the storm is about reaching you. But I trust your fortitude will keep you up. Your mother and myself think, that as circumstances are so greatly changed, we should change our style of living. Indeed, it is absolutely necessary, for we could not support it two months."

"We have settled all that, pa," Adeline said, smiling. "You are to get a smaller and cheaper house, and to sell off a good deal of the costly furniture. Constance and I intend teaching music and drawing; and Margaret is going to assist mother about the house, so that we will only have to keep a cook. How do you like that arrangement?"

"Better than any I could have proposed. You

do not know, my children, what a load you have taken from my heart. We shall yet, I feel, lift our heads. I am still as capable of doing business as ever, and must soon get into something. In the mean time, we can realize at least a thousand dollars on our useless and surplus furniture; and this, with your efforts at teaching music and drawing, will keep us comfortably for a year. Ere that expires, I shall be in some business, I hope."

"There is no reason why we should be unhappy," said Adeline when her father ceased speaking. "I am sure that I feel more cheerful in prospect of doing what we propose, than I ever did in prospect of any thing in my life."

"There is no doubt, Adeline," said her father, "that the only path of contentment is that of duty, cheerfully entered into. I am glad, indeed, that you have all so readily and willingly entered that path. But you must not expect all to be pleasant. You will find your intimacies of years broken into. Old friends will be friends no longer. Even upon the street, you will find yourself passed by unnoticed by those who have been your companions since childhood."

"And we have talked all that over too, pa," said the affectionate girl, looking him in the face with a smile that had in it much of sadness. "It is hard, of course, but we must bear it. Already I have had my first trial. Yesterday, while out for a little while, I met Florence A——, and she passed me just as if I were a perfect stranger. I know she saw me, for she looked right into my face, and I paused, naturally, smiling, to speak to her. We

have been intimate, you know, for years. I felt it, for the time, keenly, and thought it a most cruel slight. But I can think calmly about it now. Such heartless friends are not worth retaining."

"And most certainly, Adeline, if Florence inherits her father's peculiar spirit, you need not crave her friendship. He positively refused to release me, even after giving up every thing—charged me with dishonesty, and talked about seeing me rotting in a jail; and I never could have got released, if the creditors had not generously, for my sake, agreed to pay him and another, as heartless, their entire claims."

"Oh, pa! Is it possible that any man could be so unfeeling?"

"Yes, my child, there are many such. Nothing less than the pound of flesh will suit them."

"I am glad, then, that Florence cut me; for I am sure that I never could have been on friendly terms again with her."

As the girls had proposed, numerous articles of furniture were sold, and the family then removed into a smaller house, at a rent of four hundred dollars per annum. A sign soon made its appearance at the side of the front door, with the announcement—"MUSIC AND DRAWING TAUGHT BY THE MISSES ELDRIDGE." Several of the daily papers contained their advertisement.

"Why, see here, girls," said a Mrs. Coolidge, who had a growing family, and a pretty numerous one too, on the morning that their advertisement appeared, "the Misses Eldridge advertise to teach music and drawing. They have been unfortunate,

and we must encourage them. Besides, we all know how exquisitely Adeline and Constance can sing and play, and they are such amiable young ladies into the bargain. How much I admire them for thus at once endeavouring to aid their father!"

"Four of us are taking lessons now, and we'll all go there, won't we, ma?" said one of the misses.

"Certainly, I would rather you would go there than anywhere else. We must call and see them this very afternoon."

Sure enough, Mrs. Coolidge and her two eldest girls, who had already gone into company, and had been on friendly terms with the young ladies they proposed to visit, prepared to go out that afternoon, and call upon Adeline and her sisters. Just as they were ready, Florence A—— and her mother dropped in. After a little conversation on various unimportant topics, Mrs. A—— said—

"So, old Eldridge has gone all to pieces. They say he has made a wonderful bad business of it, and many strongly suspect him of unfair dealing."

"And I see," broke in Florence, "that the girls have set up a music and drawing school. Who could have thought they would ever come to that? I should not think they could hold up their heads after the conduct of their father. But there are strange people in the world. I saw Adeline once in the street since, and she looked me in the face as unconcerned as ever. I was so disgusted at her want of true feeling, that I passed her unnoticed. I can't understand some people."

"I should think, Mrs. A——," said Mrs. Coolidge, "that the fact of the girls being compelled to open

a school ought to exonerate the father from any suspicion of unfair dealing. Mr. Coolidge told me that he was one of the creditors, and that Mr. Eldridge honourably gave up every thing."

"And my husband told me," responded Mrs. A——, "that matters and things looked bad enough, and that if he could have had his way with him, he would have sent him to prison, as he deserved."

Mrs. Coolidge did not reply, for she had been told of Mr. A——'s unfeeling, and even brutal conduct, and gradually changed the subject. After the visitors had retired, she went out as she had designed, with her two eldest daughters, and called on Mrs. Eldridge and the girls. The two families had been on intimate terms. After a brief and friendly conversation, and a renewal of kind feelings, Mrs. Coolidge proposed to send four of her girls to receive lessons in music, and also in drawing. The terms were named and agreed upon, when she said—

"I think, Adeline, I can get you a good many scholars. If you have no objection, I will go among some of your former friends, many of whom, I doubt not, have nearly forgotten you already, and stir up an interest in your favour."

"You are very kind, Mrs. Coolidge," Adeline replied, with feeling. "I am willing, for one, to rest our cause in your hands. The fact of our setting up a school is, of course, evidence enough that we have need to do so. All we now want are scholars. Give us plenty of these, and we will ask no more."

"I'll see what I can do for you, and I intend in-

terestin g several who possess influence. We'll get up a good school among us, depend upon it."

Mrs. Coolidge was as good as her word. She did interest herself, and very soon Adeline and Constance had as many scholars as they could attend to, which brought them in a very handsome income—fully enough to bear all the expenses of the family.

Mr. Eldridge, who was an active and correct business man, opened a commission store, and through the recommendations of some of his old friends, soon got consignments to a large amount, and profitable in their character. Gradually he began to feel that he was again rising, though very slowly. Had the entire burden of the family been upon him, he would have had an income little, if any, beyond his necessary expenses; but his daughters' school continued prosperous, and at the end of the first year was established on a profitable basis. Instead of having to spend his earnings, he had, at the end of the period just named, fifteen hundred dollars in cash, and he knew very well how to turn it judiciously. The end of the second year found him with four thousand dollars, with a business yielding a net income of two thousand. Adeline, in the mean time, had married a young merchant of some capital, who was known as a careful business man. The school, now conducted by Constance and Margaretta, had acquired a reputation in New York that made it necessary to remove to a larger house, which had been fitted up on a liberal scale. Various branches were taught, under the charge of competent teachers, and the whole establishment

was too promising and profitable to leave room for the idea of abandoning it, even if their father should again get up in the world, as things seemed to promise.

Five years more passed away, and in that time Mr. Eldridge had been able to pay off every dollar of the old claims against him, and still found himself certainly worth ten thousand dollars, with a fair prospect before him of going up pretty rapidly. It so happened that his store was now alongside of Mr. A——'s. The latter individual had never taken any notice of him since his failure, and he had certainly no objection.

An event occurred at this time in New York the remembrance and the effects of which will remain for many years to come. I mean the great fire. It so happened that but a few days before, an arrival from the East Indies had filled A——'s store with silks and other valuable goods to the amount of two hundred thousand dollars. These were utterly consumed in the terrible conflagration. But it so happened that the fire, in that direction, was arrested there, and Mr. Eldridge's store remained untouched. A——'s insurance was worthless, and, although of the "solvent class," he was ruined.

No one seemed to feel for him, who had never had any regard for the misfortunes of others. Gradually the meagre remnant, or shadow of property that remained was exhausted; and, with his wife and daughter, he sank from the observation of those who had once known him as completely as if dead and buried.

It was, perhaps, in January, some two years after

ward, that a thinly clad young woman presented herself at the academy for young ladies, in —— street, kept by Constance and Margaretta.

"Are you in want of a teacher, ma'am?" she said to Constance, who went down into the parlour on her being announced.

There was something strangely familiar in the face and tones of the speaker. But still, she did not know her.

"No, Miss, we are not just now. What branch are you capable of teaching?"

"I can teach music, ma'am, and I understand French, and can speak it fluently."

"Let me hear you play," said Constance. And the stranger sat down to the piano, and performed with exquisite taste several pieces.

"Do you sing?" she asked.

"I have not practised much recently, but I used to be thought a good singer."

"May I ask you to sing something? Perhaps we may make a vacancy for you, if you can sing well," said Constance, her interest in the stranger increasing momently, and the familiarity of her face and tones surprising her more and more every moment.

The young woman again sat down to the instrument, and sang with much taste and evident emotion an old, familiar air, that sent the thoughts and feelings of Constance back to other times and other scenes.

"And now," she said, with something of eager interest, "may I ask your name?"

"Florence A——," replied the young woman,

dropping her eyes to the floor, while the colour mounted to her cheeks.

"Is it possible! Oh, how you have changed, Florence!" Constance said, tenderly, taking her hand.

"Suffering and poverty will change any one," she replied, bitterly. Then, after a moment's silence, she continued: "My father and mother are both sick, and in circumstances of great destitution. I have tried my best with my needle; but it won't do. I can't get bread for us all. As a last resort I have come to you, hoping that I might touch your heart with our distresses. I know I can be useful in your school, if you only have a place for me. This is all I ask. Have I any thing to hope, Constance?"

And the poor creature stood before her, with the tears streaming down her thin, pale cheeks, eager, yet seeming to hope almost against hope.

"Yes, every thing!" was the quick response of Constance.

"May heaven reward you!" she ejaculated, sinking upon a chair.

"I know your facility and correctness in the French, and you are just the one I want to give the correct pronunciation to my class in that language. I will engage you at once at a salary of five hundred dollars, and be glad to get you."

Florence was overcome at this unlooked-for result, so different from what she had dared to hope. Mr. Eldridge, coming in at the moment, and learning who she was, instantly ordered every thing necessary to be sent to her father and mother.

Florence was at once installed into her new vocation, not, however, until Constance and Margaretta had made a change in her outward appearance; and she filled it in every way to their satisfaction. Sorrows and reverses had done much for her, in developing the good and true, that had wellnigh been lost.

A few months after this event, Mr. A——-, who had prided himself upon being of the "solvent class" some few years before, was glad to accept an annual salary of three hundred dollars from Mr. Eldridge, for merely staying in his store, and doing a little writing now and then. Even this was very acceptable, and with the salary of Florence helped to support his family comfortably.

And now, we will only say—Let no man boast of his being of the "solvent class," and vainly suppose that fire nor flood can reach him. Riches often take to themselves wings and fly away. The wealthy man of to-day is often the pauper of to-morrow. This is the history of every year, and of all ages. Therefore, let none be unmerciful to the unfortunate, for who can say that his turn may not come next?

THE COQUETTE.

ADA GLENN had been a sad trifler in her time. Her chief pleasure seemed to lie in extorting admiration from the other sex, and then sporting with the feeling she had awakened. In at least half a dozen instances young men had been encouraged to pay her attention for months at a time, and when, confident of having won her regard, they came forward with serious offers of marriage, she threw them from her with an indifference that was both mortifying and painful.

But, like most of those who play this game with the feelings of others, Ada was made to taste a cup as bitter as any mixed by her hands for the lips of her victims.

A young physician named Bedford, whose prospects in life were much better than are usually presented to the eyes of graduates in his profession, met Ada one evening, and was exceedingly pleased with her—and no less pleased was Ada with the young physician. A wish to make a good impression, added to her usual habit of putting on her best grace when in company with young men, made Ada more than usually interesting, and when Dr. Bedford separated from the bewitching young girl, he was completely enamoured. He took an early opportunity to call upon her, and was received

in a manner that encouraged him to repeat his visits.

Never were visits more agreeable to any one than were those of Dr. Bedford to Ada Glenn. But the old spirit had not died out, and really flattered as she was by the young man's attentions, Ada was tempted to give him a specimen of her power and independence.

No very long time elapsed ere Dr. Bedford laid his heart at Ada's feet. With a thrill of pleasure could she have accepted the proffered gift of love; but to yield at once seemed like becoming too easy a prize, and she therefore affected profound astonishment at the doctor's proposal; treated it rather lightly, and deeply wounded his naturally sensitive and independent feelings by too marked an exhibition of disdain.

Doctor Bedford retired with his mind in a fever of excitement. His admiration of, and love for Ada, had been of the warmest character. Judging from her manner, he had felt warranted in believing that the regard he felt for her was fully reciprocated; and when he approached her with a confession of what was in his heart, he was prepared for any reception but the one he received. To be repulsed then, coldly, proudly, and almost contemptuously, was to receive a blow of the severest kind, and one, the pain of which he was not likely soon to forget.

From the dwelling of Ada, Dr. Bedford retired to his office with his mind greatly excited. There he found a young friend with whom he was intimate, and to whom, as he could not hide his feelings, he

communicated in confidence the result of his interview with Ada. To his surprise, the friend said—

"I can hardly pity you, doctor. I saw you were pleased with that gay flirt, who is fascinating enough; but I did not dream that you were serious in your attentions to one known everywhere as a most heartless coquette."

Dr. Bedford looked surprised. "Are you in earnest?" said he.

"In earnest? Certainly! Didn't you know that this was her character?"

"I had not the most remote suspicion."

"Strange that it shouldn't have come to your ears! I can point you to three that she has jilted within my own knowledge."

"If that is her character," said the doctor, rallying himself with a strong effort of self-control, and speaking in a composed and resolute voice, "I will at once obliterate her image from my mind. It is unworthy to rest there. I did not love Ada, but a fair ideal of womanly virtue that I vainly believed she embodied."

"You are right. She is not worthy of you, my friend, beautiful, intelligent, and interesting as she is."

"No. She is utterly unworthy. Fortunate am I that she did not accept my offer."

It required, on the part of Ada, a strong effort to assume toward Dr. Bedford a false exterior, and when he withdrew from her presence, composed and dignified in his manner, she more than half regretted her folly. But she forced back this feeling with

a gay smile and a toss of the head, saying, half aloud—

"He'll be here again before a week goes by."

But Ada was slightly in error. The week passed without bringing her lover. And so went by two, three, and four weeks. But, vain of her power over the other sex, Ada still endeavoured to maintain a confident spirit, though there were times that the sudden thought that Dr. Bedford would never again seek to win her favour, made the blood gather with a chill around her heart.

About this time a friend gave a little fancy-dress party, and Ada learned, much to her real delight, that the individual, who of all others had most struck her fancy, was to be present. This was to afford the first opportunity for meeting, since her half haughty repulse, the man who had offered her, in all sincerity, a true and loving heart.

An overweening vanity made Ada confident of her power with the sterner sex; and she believed that only a slight yielding effort on her part was necessary to bring the doctor again to her side.

Choosing her costume for the evening, Ada arrayed herself with great care, and in a style that she believed would attract attention. The fashion of her dress was that of a hundred years ago, and the material a rich old brocade, in which her grandmother had danced the minuet many a time in her younger days.

Calm in her conscious power, Ada joined the gay company at her friend's, and her quick eyes soon made known the fact that Dr. Bedford was already present. Her heart beat quicker, and the colour

on her cheeks grew deeper; but no one could read in her well-schooled face a trace of what was passing in her mind. No long time passed before the young doctor was thrown near her, so near that a sign of recognition became necessary. He spoke to her, but in a manner that sent a nervous chill to her heart. Not that he was studiedly polite or cold; not that he manifested resentment; but in his eye, voice, face, and manner, was a language she could read, and it told her that to him she was no longer an object of interest.

For this she was, of all things, least prepared. She had never felt toward any one as she felt toward this young man; and now, when the first well-grounded fear of losing him stole through her bosom, she became inwardly agitated, and in spite of every effort to control herself, manifested too plainly the fact that she was ill at ease.

Fancy parties were novelties at the time, and all except Ada, who usually led off on festive occasions, entered into the spirit of the hour. Even Dr. Bedford appeared to enjoy himself as much as any But the beautiful coquette, whose peculiar style of costume attracted all eyes, had, for once, lost the gay exterior for which she was ever distinguished, and there were but few present by whom this was not remarked.

Once or twice Ada was thrown directly into the company of Dr. Bedford, when he treated her with an ease and politeness that, more than any thing else, tended to extinguish the hope that had arisen into a flame in her heart. Had he manifested any emotion; had he looked grave, troubled, indignant,

proud, haughty, or any thing else but calmly indifferent and self-possessed, Ada would have felt sure of her power over him. But a perception of the real truth was as distinct to her as if the most emphatic words, sealing her fate, had been uttered in her ears.

Earlier than the rest Ada retired, unable longer to control herself as she could wish, and unwilling to expose, to eyes already too observant, the change that had come over her feelings.

From that hour, Ada Glenn ceased to be the gay, buoyant, attractive girl who had extorted admiration from so many, and trifled, in her vain pride and thoughtlessness, with all. She rarely went into company, and then her sober mien left her usually in the background. The lively belle, in a few months, ceased to attract attention; and young men who had been captives at her feet, wondered why she had exercised such power over them.

As for Bedford, he erred in believing that, with a single dash of the will, he had effaced for ever the image of Ada from his mind. Wounded pride and honest indignation had raised him, in a moment, superior to the weakness of his nature. But a long period did not elapse before line after line began to reappear, and before he was really aware of what was going on within, he found himself gazing upon the image of the maiden distinct as ever upon his heart.

This discovery, when first made, was far from being pleasant to the young man; and he turned from the fair image with impatient scorn. But turn which way he would, it was still before him. Occa-

sionally, he heard of Ada as greatly changed, and sometimes he was thrown into company with her, when the change was apparent to his own eyes. These meetings, whenever they took place, left him in a musing, sober state. There was something about Ada that still interested him; and when, as it occasionally happened, he looked suddenly toward her, and met her eyes fixed intently upon him with a sad, earnest, tender look, he had feelings that he was hardly able to understand.

Thus affairs progressed until, unexpectedly, the young couple found themselves brought together in a pic-nic. Dr. Bedford was less displeased at this circumstance than he would have been a few months earlier; but he was careful not to throw himself purposely in Ada's way, for his self-possession and cool indifference, so far as she was concerned, no longer existed. The thought of her, even, had now power to disturb the pulsations of his heart.

The pleasant day had drawn nearly to a close. Two or three times Bedford had been brought into such close contact with Ada, that he could not, without appearing rude, have avoided speaking a few words to her. On these occasions he said little; but it was impossible to help observing, in the manner of her replies, in the tones, and in the expression of her countenance, something that told him, as plainly as language could have uttered it, that she deeply repented of her former conduct toward him.

"It is too late," said the young man to himself, with some bitterness of feeling, as he reflected upon what it was impossible not to perceive And even

as he said this, there arose extenuating arguments in his mind that he in vain strove to expel.

Disturbed by such thoughts and feelings, Dr. Bedford wandered away from the gay party, and remained alone for nearly an hour. As he returned, he came suddenly upon Ada, seated in a pensive attitude, just above a little dashing waterfall, down into which she was looking. She was so entirely lost in the scene, or, more probably, in thoughts which it was impossible to drive out of her mind, that she did not observe the young man's approach. Bedford paused suddenly, and his first impulse was to retreat. But, not being able to get his consent to do this, he after a little hesitation advanced, and when within a few paces roused her from her reverie by a few lightly uttered words. Ada turned with a start, while a deep crimson mantled her face. It was some time before she could command herself sufficiently to reply with any thing like composure, and even then her voice slightly trembled.

Few words passed between them as, side by side, they slowly returned to where they had left their companions, for both were afraid to trust themselves to speak. But that meeting had decided the fate of both. Before a week elapsed, Dr. Bedford, breaking through pride and every other restraining sentiment, visited Ada, and, before leaving her, renewed his offer of marriage, which was accepted amid a gush of joyful tears. Deeply had Ada suffered through her folly, and from her suffering she had come forth a purer, truer, and better woman.

There are a few like Ada. But rarely does the vain coquette escape with so brief a period of suf-

fering. Usually, with her, it is a life-long season of sorrow and repentance. After rejecting, with heartless levity, her worthy suitors, she yields her hand at last to the most unworthy; and, unblessed by true affection, goes wearily on her way through the world, glad when the hour comes in which she may lay down her burdens, and find rest and peace in the quiet grave.

MR. WINKLEMAN AT HOME.

Mr. Winkleman, after eating his breakfast in silence, arose without a remark to any one, and left the room in which his family were assembled at the morning meal. Taking up his hat, he passed from the house. As he came into the open air and made two or three deep inspirations, in the unconscious effort to relieve his bosom from a sense of oppression, he became very distinctly aware that a heavy weight rested upon his feelings.

"What's the matter with me? Why should I feel troubled?"

Thus Mr. Winkleman inquired of himself. And as he walked along, in the direction of the store, with his eyes cast down, he searched about in thought for the cause of his unpleasant state of feelings.

"There's nothing in my business to trouble me." So he talked with himself. "Every thing is going

on prosperously. No heavy payments for a month to come. What does it mean?"

Search in this direction not revealing the cause of uneasiness, Mr. Winkleman's thoughts went back to the home he had left so unceremoniously—with such an apparent indifference toward his wife and children. This was evidently coming nearer the source of trouble, for the weight on his feelings grew more oppressive. And now he was conscious of having been in a very uncomfortable, unsocial state, during all breakfast time. Why was this? Ah! It was all clear now—a sigh attested the discovery.

Mr. Winkleman, though a well-meaning man, and kind in the main to his family, was sensitive to little incongruities and annoyances, and not over patient when they occurred. He was apt to speak sharply on the spur of the moment—always to the disturbance of his own peace after the excitement of the occasion was over.

On this particular morning, his daughter Fanny, a bright, playful, rather thoughtless girl, in her thirteenth year, committed some act of rudeness, for which he reproved her in so harsh a manner, that the child burst into tears.

The instant Mr. Winkleman spoke, he felt that he had done wrong. Experience, as well as reason, had long ago made clear to his mind the folly of harsh or fretful reproof. The clear conviction, in a parent's mind, that he has wronged his child, is always attended with pain. This conviction was felt by Mr. Winkleman, and pain followed. Fanny glided, weeping, from the room, and the erring

father silently—almost moodily—went on to complete his toilet. While thus engaged, some article of dress was found not to be in suitable order. Already disturbed in mind, this newly exciting cause prompted the utterance of an impatient ejaculation, with an added word of censure toward his wife for neglect.

Mrs. Winkleman felt his unkind manner and expression—what true wife does not feel rebuke or censure keenly?—and though prompt to repair the neglect, showed that she was hurt.

Here lay the whole secret. Mr. Winkleman had permitted himself to feel and to speak unkindly, first to his child, and then to his wife. Such a state of feeling, in a man like Mr. Winkleman, could not exist without of itself producing an unhappy frame of mind; but when to this was added the remembrance of harsh and hasty speech toward his wife and one of his children, with a perception of their mental pain, cause enough for all his uncomfortable sensations were apparent.

"I wish I had more control of myself," said Mr. Winkleman, with a sigh.

He felt worse, now that all was clear to his mind, for self-condemnation was added.

"I must control myself better." Good purposes were forming, and these always have a tranquillizing effect. "Harsh words and an unkind manner do little, if any good. If things go wrong, these act feebly as correctives. I must, and will control myself better."

By the time Mr. Winkleman arrived at his store he was able to dismiss these thoughts, and to enter

with his usual earnestness upon the business of the day.

On turning his steps homeward, at dinner time, thought preceded, and something of the oppression from which he had suffered in the morning now rested on his feelings. He remembered how it was when he left, and imagination could realize no change in the aspect of things. He saw the glistening eyes and grieving face of his child, and the sober, almost sad countenance of his wife. To meet these, and yet assume a cheerful manner, was for him no light achievement. But it must, if possible, be done. How relieved he was, when Fanny, his light-hearted little girl, met him with a sunny face, and claimed her usual kiss. Mrs. Winkleman smiled too, as pleasantly as if there had been no morning cloud. Yet, even from this he suffered rebuke. There was a generous denial of self, and a loving forgiveness on their part, that humbled and sobered him. Ah! if he could only forget the past, so that he might enter into the joy of the present. But that was impossible. Whatever is written on the memory in pain, leaves too vivid a record.

Yet, there was one thing he could do, and that was to speak and act affectionately and kindly. How potent was the charm that lay in his words and manner! What a new sphere of life seemed to pervade the little home circle. The morning cloud had passed, and the risen sun exhaled the early dew.

But ere the dinner hour was over, a touch discordant jarred the pleasant harmony. Fanny hap-

pened to overturn a glass of water, at which Mr. Winkleman said impatiently, and with a frown—

"What a careless girl you are!"

The blood mounted to Fanny's cheeks and brow, and tears came into her eyes.

Scarcely were the words uttered by Mr. Winkleman, ere he was sobered by regret.

"Try and be more careful, Fanny," said he, in a kinder voice.

"I didn't mean to do it, father."

Fanny's lip quivered. She tried to regain her self-possession; but the very kindness in her father's voice helped, now, to break down her feelings, and she sobbed aloud. Mr. Winkleman didn't like this. His sudden irritation had clouded his perceptions, and he did not, therefore, see into the mind of his child, and comprehend her state. He attributed rather to anger, or perverseness, than of wounded feelings that would express their pain, the tears of his child.

"I don't see any use in your crying about it," said Mr. Winkleman, a little sternly.

Fanny's sobs increased. Finding it impossible to control herself, she left the table, and retired from the room.

Mrs. Winkleman's eyes followed, with a sad look, her child; and over her whole countenance gathered a sober hue, as she vanished through the door. Mr. Winkleman saw the change his impatient temper had wrought, and his feelings took even a darker shade; for self-reproaches, stinging sharply, were added to mortification.

Alas! How all was marred again—marred through

Mr. Winkleman's unfortunate lack of self-control. His heart was heavier when he left his dwelling and took his way to his store, than in the morning. He did not now have to search about in his mind for the causes that produced the weight upon his feelings. Alas! they were too apparent.

"I must do better than this. It is unmanly—nay worse, unjust—even worse than that—cruel," he said to himself, as he sat down in his private office, and mused alone. Half of the afternoon was spent in self-reproaches, repentance, and the formation of good resolutions. He reviewed the past through many years, and saw how, times almost without number, he had, through impatience and want of a thoughtful regard for his wife and children, destroyed their happiness and his own.

"I once heard a lady say, not knowing that the words would reach my ears, that Mr. Winkleman was a good husband and father. I was flattered exceedingly, and prided myself on the truth of her remark. But was the remark really true? Alas! I fear not. The captious, impatient, sharp-speaking husband and father, merits not such a commendation."

Humbled in his own eyes, and grieving for the pain he had occasioned in his family, Mr. Winkleman returned home at the close of the day with a heavy heart. He wished to bring sunshine into his dwelling; but, unable to rally himself and put on a cheerful countenance, he felt that his presence would be far mere likely to darken than brighten the spirits of his wife and children.

As Mr. Winkleman placed his hand upon the door

to open it, he experienced no sense of pleasure. Fanny's tearful eyes were before him, and her sobs yet rung in his ears. With almost noiseless step he entered, and was going quietly up stairs, when he met his daughter coming down.

"Well, Fanny!" He forced a smile, and compelled his voice to assume a gentle, loving tone.

Instantly, Fanny's arms were around his neck, and her warm lips on his cheek. He could not but return the kiss, nor help laying his hand upon her head, and toying affectionately with her sunny curls. When he entered the room where his wife was sitting, Fanny walked by his side, with both her hands clasping his arm.

If a cloud rested on the spirit of his wife when he entered, he saw not its shadow in her face. Light from his own countenance was reflected back from hers in sunny brightness.

"I must keep this sky undimmed," said Mr. Winkleman to himself. "It has been dark to-day; but mine was the hand that shrouded it in gloom."

Yet, ere half an hour passed, his impatient spirit was nigh overshadowing their firmament. Neither his wife nor children were perfect—and his weakness was looking for entire harmony, order, and good taste in all their words and deeds. But suffering had brought true perceptions of his own error, and these made him wiser. He controlled himself, and when it was right to use words of correction to his children, they were spoken with mildness. He could but wonder at their hidden power.

What a pleasant evening was that which closed on so dark a day.

Morning found Mr. Winkleman in danger of relapsing into his old state. But the memory of former pain was potent to help his quick returning good resolutions. Fanny jarred his feelings with some annoying act of carelessness or disorder, and the sharp reproof was on his tongue. But he restrained its utterance. When entire self-control was his, he gently pointed out to her wherein she was wrong. With a prompt apology and a promise to do better, Fanny corrected her error.

At the breakfast table, Mr. Winkleman did not suffer himself to be thrown off of his guard. He had not enjoyed a meal so well for weeks, and could not help remarking how light and cheerful he felt, as, on rising from the table, and saying good morning, almost gayly, he left the house, and went out into the street with a light air murmuring on his lips.

"Good humour." What a power it possesses! and what a power there is in gentle words! Mr. Winkleman proved this, not only on the present, but on many after occasions; and so may we all prove it.

Reader, do you often, like Mr. Winkleman, go out from your home with a weight on your feelings? Look again into the mirror we hold up, and see if you cannot discover the cause. The fault, as was the case with Mr. Winkleman, may be all in yourself.

THE MAN AND THE DEMON.

PART FIRST.—THE MAN.

THE air is soft, and laden with fragrance from the newly-mown fields; amid the leafy branches of old trees are nestling the weary birds; the valleys lie in deepening shadows, though golden sunlight lingers yet upon the hilltops. It is the closing hour of a lovely day in June.

Hark! a manly voice has broken the pervading stillness.

> "Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
> Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home."

How the fine tones swell upward! How in every modulation is perceived some varied expression of the sentiment conveyed in the words! The man is singing from heart-fulness. Home is to him the dearest spot on earth—the loveliest place in all the wide, wide world, humble though it be! Listen!—

> "An exile from home, pleasures dazzle in vain,
> Oh, give me my lowly thatch'd cottage again."

There he comes, just emerging from that little grove of cedars, where the road winds by the pleasant brookside. How erect his form! How elastic his step! What a light is thrown back from his bare and ample forehead!

Yonder, where the valley seems to close, but, in reality, only bends around a mountain spur, to open in new and varied beauty, stands a neat cottage, its doors and windows vine-wreathed and flower-gemmed. Above this home of love and peace are spread the leafy branches of a century-old elm. In summer, this guardian tree receives into its ample bosom the fierce sun-rays, and tempers them with coolness. In winter, though shorn of its verdure, it breaks the fury of the strong north-west, so that it falls not too rudely upon the nestling cottage beneath.

In this sweet and sheltered spot are the household treasures of Henry Erskine. He has gathered them here, because his love seeks for them all external blessings his hand can give. Years agone, this cottage was the home of his gentle wife. Here he had wooed her, and here won her trusting heart. Time wore on—death and misfortune scattered the old household, and the pleasant homestead passed into the hands of strangers. On the day it was sold, Erskine coming suddenly upon his young wife, found her in tears. He pressed to know the cause. Half was revealed and half but guessed. Love prompted the resolution that was instantly formed. Three years afterward, Erskine, through untiring labour and self-denial, had saved enough to purchase back the cottage, into which, with a new and higher sense of enjoyment, he gathered his fruitful vine, and the olive-branches already bending above and around him.

The best husband, the kindest father, the truest man in all that pleasant valley, was Henry Erskine.

He had been absent a few days on business, and now returning to his home-treasures, it was from the fulness of his heart that he sung—

"Home, home—sweet, sweet home!
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

And, as he sung on, and strode forward, quick, eagerly listening ears caught the music of his well-known voice, and ere he had reached, by many hundred yards, the little white gate that opened from the road to his dwelling, tiny arms were tightly clasping his neck, and soft lips pressing his cheek and forehead.

Oh! what gushing gladness was in his heart! How large it seemed in his bosom! How full of good desires and bounteous wishes for the loved ones who made his home a paradise!

"Dear Anna!" How many times he said this, as with both hands laid upon the fair temples of his happy wife, he smoothed back her raven hair, and gazed into the loving depths of her dark bright eyes!

The sunniest day in the whole calendar of their lives was this. As Erskine sat amid his children, with their gentle-hearted mother at his side, he felt that the cup of his happiness was full to overflowing.

And yet—ah! why are we forced to write it!—ere the evening of that glad reunion closed, a faint shadow had fallen on the heart of Mrs. Erskine. She had been aware of an unusual degree of elation on the part of her husband in rejoining them after his brief absence, but thought of it only as an ex-

cess of gladness at getting home again. Two or three neighbours called in later in the evening, when, in agreement with a very bad custom then prevailing, something to drink was brought forth, and before the neighbours retired, the undue elevation of spirits noticed by the wife of Mr. Erskine, had increased to a degree that left her in no doubt as to its source.

"How sober you look, Anna dear!" said Mr. Erskine, with his usual tenderness of manner, on the next morning. "Are you well?"

"Oh yes. But what a strange and terrible dream I had! I can't shake off the effects. And yet I know it was only a dream."

"A dream!—Is that all?" said Erskine, with a smile. "But what was it, dear? It must have been something terrible, indeed, to leave a shadow upon your spirits."

"A very strange dream, Henry. I thought we were sitting at the table just as we were sitting last evening, with our pleasant neighbours around us. You had just taken a glass from your lips, after drinking my health, as you did then. You placed it near me, so that I could see into it to the bottom, where still remained a small portion of liquor. Something fixed my gaze, and presently I saw, in miniature, a perfect image of your face. Surprised, I looked up; but you and all the company were gone! I was alone, in a strange, desolate, meagrely furnished room. The table was still beside me, and on it yet remained the glass, toward which my eyes turned with a fascination I could not resist. Into the liquor at the bottom I gazed, and there, more

distinct than at first, I saw your face; but now the eyes had a sharp, eager look, that seemed to go through me with a sense of pain. The tender arching of your lips was gone, and they were drawn against the teeth with a cruel expression. I feel the shudder still which then ran through my heart. O Henry! a look such as I then saw on your face would kill me!"

And the wife of Henry Erskine, overcome with feeling, laid her head upon his shoulder and sobbed.

"Dear Anna! Forget the wretched dream!" said Erskine, as he drew his arm tightly around her. "I wonder that a mere phantom of the night can have such power to move you."

"But that was not all," resumed Mrs. Erskine, as soon as she had grown calm enough to speak. "The face now began to rise up from the top of the glass, rounding as it rose, until a head and well-defined neck stood above the vessel; and all the while a malignant change was progressing on the countenance. More horrible still! The glass suddenly enlarged enormously its dimensions, and in it I now saw, in fearful coils, the body of a serpent, bearing up higher and higher the face and head of a man. Another instant, and horrid, slimy folds were around my neck and body! In their tightening, suffocating clasp, I awoke. O Henry! was it not terrible? What could have excited such a phantasy?"

"A horrible nightmare," said Erskine; "a nightmare only. And yet, how strange it is that such an

image found entrance into your innocent, guarded mind!"

It was all in vain that Mrs. Erskine strove, throughout that day, to drive the shadow from her heart. The dream was of too peculiar and startling a nature to admit of this. Moreover, its singular connection with the neighbourly conviviality of the previous evening, when she was forced to observe the unusual elation of her husband's mind, gave food for questionings and thoughts, which in no way served to obliterate the dream, or to tranquillize her feelings. When her husband returned home at the close of day, he saw in her countenance, for the first time, something that annoyed and repelled him. Why was this? What was the meaning of the expression? Did she doubt him in any thing? Ah! How could she forget her dream —that malignant face and slimy serpent—the fatal cup and the death hidden in its fascinating contents?

It was later in the evening. The flitting shadows had been chased away by the sunny faces that gathered around the tea-table. Amid their children, all sense of oppression, of doubt, had vanished. The kneeling little ones had said, in low, reverent tones, "Our Father," and were sleeping in sweet unconsciousness. The evening had waned, and now, in accordance with habit, Mr. Erskine brought forth a decanter, and was about filling a glass therefrom, when his wife, laying her hand on his arm, said, with a sad earnestness of manner, which she strove to conceal with a smile—

"Henry dear, forgive me for saying so, but the

sight of that decanter and glass makes me shudder. I have thought all day about my dream—the serpent in the glass."

"Bearing your husband's face," said Erskine, quickly, and with rather more of feeling than he meant to express; "and you fear that he will prove the serpent in the end, to suffocate you in his horrid folds."

Henry Erskine! what could have tempted you to this utterance? Ah! the truth must be told. *It was the serpent in the glass!* False friends, as he came homeward that evening, had drawn him aside to drink with them. Alas! a malignant demon was in the cup, and its poison entered his bosom. He did not drink even to partial physical intoxication; but far enough to disturb the calm, rational balance of his mind, and thus to change the order of mental influx. He was no longer the equipoised man, and, therefore, no longer in orderly association with pure angelic spirits. Just in the degree that he was separated from these, came he into association with spirits of an opposite character—demons in their eager desire to extinguish all that is pure and good in human nature. And thus it ever is, in a greater or less degree, with all who disturb the rational balance of their minds, either partially or mentally, by the use of what intoxicates. This is the reason why the way of the inebriate, even from the beginning, is marked by such strange infatuation. He seems to be in the power of evil spirits who govern him at will, and he is, in reality, thus in their power.

An instant pallor overspread the face of Mrs. Erskine, at her husband's cruel retort. What an age of wretchedness was comprised in a single moment of time! Erskine saw the effect of his words, and repented their utterance. He even, for a moment, partially yielded to an impulse to put up the liquor untasted; but the demon tempter was too close to his side, and too prompt to whisper that such an act would be an unmanly (!) concession to his wife's foolish weakness. And so, his mind already partially unbalanced, as has been seen, he completed the dethronement of manly reason, by pouring out and drinking a larger draught of spirits than he was accustomed to take.

Alas! how quickly has the *man* become eclipsed —partially now, and to shine forth again in the unclouded heavens. Yet, to be eclipsed again, and again, until final darkness covers all.

Reader, we have shown you the *man*. When your eyes first rested upon him, at a single point of the orbit in which he moved, was not the form beautiful to look upon, and the ministry of his affections full of good to others? We have another picture—not that of a *man*, but of a *demon*. Will you look upon it? Ah! if you turn your eyes away, we will not question the act. It is a picture upon which some need to look, and, therefore, it is sketched, though with a hurried and reluctant hand. Here it is.

PART SECOND.—THE DEMON.

"SOME brandy," said a pale-featured man, coming up hurriedly to the bar of a small country tavern, and reaching out his hand eagerly.

"Nothing more at this bar without the money: that's decided!" was the tavern-keeper's firmly spoken answer.

"Just a single glass, for Heaven's sake! I'll settle all off to-morrow," urged the wretched man, as he leaned on the counter, and bent far over toward the shelves on which the bottles of liquor were ranged.

"Not a drop. And, see here, Erskine, I don't want you about here any more; so just keep away for good and all. If you'll do that, I'll wipe off old scores; if not, confound me! if I don't clap you in jail for debt. I won't have such a drunken, good-for-nothing fellow hanging about my premises. It's disgraceful!"

"That's hard talk, Grimes—hard talk!" said the poor wretch; "and you with so much of my money in your till. But come! don't be so close with me. There—do you see my hand"—and he held out his arm, that shook with a strong nervous tremour—"I must have something to steady me, or I'm gone!"

"Not a dram more. I've said it, and I'll stick to it," coldly and cruelly answered the landlord. "And what's more, you've got to leave this bar instanter."

And as Grimes said this, he passed from behind

the counter, with the evident intention of forcing his customer out of the house. A quick change was now visible, not only in the face of Erskine, but in his whole person. His hand, that lay trembling against the bar railing, at once became steady, and griped the railing firmly; his stooping body, in appearance so weak and unstrung, rose up erect, while a fierce, defiant scowl darkened his countenance. By this time the landlord had left the bar, and was within a few feet of him.

"I want you to leave here at once," said Grimes, sharply, waving his hand, and nodding his head toward the door as he spoke.

"I'm not just ready to go," was the cool reply of Erskine, as his now glittering eyes fixed themselves on the face of Grimes.

"Go you must! I've said it, and that ends it. And, see here, you loafing vagabond!—if you ever set your foot inside of my house again, I'll cowskin you. Go!"

And he was about to lay his hand on Erskine, when the latter stepped backward a pace or two, saying, as he did so—

"Don't touch me, Bill Grimes! I've got the devil in me now, and had as lief kill you as look at you. So don't tempt me."

"Bah!" ejaculated the landlord, contemptuously, advancing again upon the inebriate, and making an attempt, as he did so, to grasp him by the collar, for the purpose of choking him into submission. His hand had scarcely touched the person of Erskine, ere the latter, with a demoniac cry, sprang upon him with so sudden a shock as to bear him to the

floor. As the landlord fell beneath his assailant, the grip of the latter was on his throat. To free himself from this he deemed an easy thing; but for once he was in error. He was not now dealing, as he supposed, with a nerveless and exhausted drunkard, whom a child might overcome. The poor, despised wretch was suddenly transformed, through an influx of malignant passions into the disordered elements of his mind, to a fierce wild beast. There was an iron grip in his hand, as it tightened on the throat of his prostrate victim; while the terrible expression of his eyes and face too clearly indicated his purpose to commit murder. And fatal would have been the result, had not the timely entrance of a third person prevented the catastrophe.

"I told you the devil was in me," said Erskine, as he shook himself free from the hands of the man who had dragged him from the fallen body of the landlord, and stood glaring a fiendlike defiance upon the now thoroughly frightened Grimes. "I meant to have killed you; and I feel like doing it yet. It would be nothing more than a just retribution. You beggar and destroy, body and soul, a poor wretch, while he has money to pay you for the hellish work; but, when every sixpence he had in the world lies safely in your till, you would thrust him out with biting insult, even though he stands shivering in nervous exhaustion before you, and almost begs for a mouthful of stimulant to save him from horrible madness. Bill Grimes! you may be thankful for your escape now, but the work shall be done more surely if ever my hand reaches

your accursed throat again. Give me some brandy!"

These last words were uttered in a loud, fierce, commanding voice. Grimes waited not for their repetition, but hurried into his bar, and taking a decanter of brandy, placed it upon the counter. This was seized by Erskine, and a large glass filled more than half full of the drugged and fiery liquor, that poisoned while it fevered the system. At a single draught this disappeared, and his hand was on the decanter again, when both the landlord and the person who had just entered interposed to prevent his drinking any further. Madly he resisted this interference; but there were two against him now, and, though he struggled desperately, he was soon hurled into the road, and the door barred against him.

Homeward the degraded man soon after turned his steps. Homeward! Had he a home? Reader, ten years have passed since you heard his mellow tones swelling upward on the evening air, in heart-gushing thankfulness for the possession of a home. He was a man then—a noble-minded, unselfish, love-inspired man, into whose arms, and upon whose bosom, were folded household treasures, more prized than all worldly wealth or honours. You saw the vine and flower-wreathed cottage nestling beneath the old elms, where a joyful reunion took place after a brief absence. You entered, gazed upon the happy group within, and called that home an earthly paradise.

Go home with Henry Erskine again. Only ten brief years have passed. Is he still in the cottage

under the elms? No, no, reader. You will not find him there. Long, long ago, his wife and children passed weeping from its door. But yonder, in that old, dingy hovel, the windows shattered, the little enclosure broken down, and every sign of vegetation, except rank weeds, gone—there you will find the wretched family of Henry Erskine. Ah! no less changed are they. You will look in vain on their countenances for signs of gentle, loving affections. In the fall of him to whom they clung, they have also fallen—not into the debasing slough of sensuality, where he lies prostrate and almost powerless; but evil affections have gradually prevailed, until the garden of their minds is overrun with thorns and briers.

You enter the wretched habitation. Surely there must be some mistake! In twice ten years a transformation such as this could hardly have been wrought. That sharp-featured, hollow-eyed woman, who sits idle, and brooding there, as if all hope in life had faded, cannot be the once glad-hearted Mrs. Erskine of "Elm Cottage"? These hungry, miserably clad, prematurely old-looking children—are they the same we saw in that pleasant home, so gay and glad with their happy father? It is incredible. This cannot be the home of a man. Alas, no! It is the abode of a demon! And, see! he enters now the dwelling accursed by his presence. Not as a man comes he, with blessings for the beloved inmates, but as a demon, scattering curses. The mother starts up, the children shrink away—all feel the shadow that rests upon their spirits grow darker.

From some cause the wretched being is in an unwonted state of excitement. There is something fearful to look upon in his face—a demoniac expression that appals. He is angry with himself—angry with every thing. In his heart is a fierce desire to commit violence.

"Ha! what are you doing here?" he cries, on discovering that his oldest boy is in the room. "Why have you come home?"

The frightened lad stammers out something about having offended his master, and being turned away from his place. Really innocent of any deliberate fault is the boy. He is not the wronger, but the wronged. He has tried to please a hard, exacting master, but failed in the earnest effort. All this the mother comprehends. But the insane father takes every thing for granted against his son. Seizing him cruelly by the hair, he strikes him with his clenched fist, and assails him with curses. Maddened at the sight, the mother seizes a heavy stick, and, with a single blow, paralyzes the arm of her husband.

She might have spared that blow. Even as it was descending, the hand that clutched the hair of the boy was loosening its grasp, and a paralyzing terror seizing the heart of the wretched drunkard. What has fixed his eyes? Why do they start thus, almost from their sockets? Is a lion in the door? —some appalling destruction at hand? Now he has sprung to his feet—an ashy pallor on his disfigured countenance—and both hands are raised to keep off some object that he sees approaching. You see nothing. No—your eyes are not opened; and pray

to Heaven they never may be as his are at this fearful moment. But, as real to him as the open door itself, entering through that door, and approaching him nearer and nearer, is the horrible form of a serpent, bearing upward the head of a man. In the face, all malignant passions are in vivid play. Nearer and nearer it comes—nearer and nearer! Backward the frightened wretch shrinks, almost howling in terror, until he crouches in a far corner of the room, both hands raised to keep off the monster that still approaches. Now, the serpent is on him! Now, its cold, slimy body is enwreathing neck and limbs! Oh! that yell of horror! Will it ever be done ringing in your ears? It was as the cry of a lost demon!

Come! come away! It is too horrible. We cannot endure the sight. There—shut the door—hide from all eyes but those of the wretched inmates, the appalling terrors of that room.

You breathe more freely—yes—but enough has been said and heard to make you sad for days—to make you thoughtful, at times, for life.

Oh, what a work! The transformation of a man into a demon! And what on this beautiful earth has power to effect so fearful a transformation? Is the fatal secret known? Do fathers, husbands, councilmen, legislators, statesmen, know in what the terrible power lies? Ah, strange, yet true, and sad to tell, the monster whose breath poisons, whose touch blights every leaf of virtue, stalks daily abroad, his name emblazoned on his forehead! And, stranger far than this—councilmen and legislators, in nearly every state, take bribes from this

monster, for the privilege of working these fearful transformations. They sell, for money, (can it be believed?) yes, they sell for money, the right to curse the hearths and homes of their fellow-men -- to scatter destruction to souls and bodies, over the length and breadth of the land!

You have seen one man transformed to a demon! It is the history of thousands and tens of thousands. All around you are in progress, like transformations. When, when will the work cease? When will the monster of destruction be bound?

Man, husband, father, citizen, sleep no longer! Up! arouse yourself! There is a terrible enemy abroad. Come up bravely, resolutely to the battle, and lay not off your armour until the victory is won. Fear not—falter not. All the powers of heaven are on your side, and if you fight on bravely, you will conquer at last. God speed the day of victory!

THE END.

T. S. Arthur's Popular Works.

These books are all gotten up in the best style of binding, and are worthy a place in every household. Copies of any of them will be sent, post paid, to any address on receipt of price by the publishers,

John E. Potter & Company,
617 Sansom Street,
PHILADELPHIA.

TEN NIGHTS IN A BAR ROOM, and What I Saw There. A truly touching series of powerfully-written Temperance sketches, which have proven a great auxiliary in the cause of reform, and have contributed largely to the author's great popularity. By T. S. Arthur. With Illustrations. Cloth. $1 25.

ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN on their Duties and Conduct in Life. Intended to strengthen their good purposes, to elevate their minds, and to educate them into sounder views than are common to the masses of society. By T. S. Arthur. Cloth. $1 25.

ADVICE TO YOUNG LADIES on their Duties and Conduct in Life. Designed to inculcate right modes of thinking as the basis of all correct action, and to eradicate the false views of life which everywhere prevail. By T. S. Arthur. Cloth. $1 25.

THE OLD MAN'S BRIDE; or, The Lesson of the Day. Showing the fatal error committed by those who, in disregard of all the better qualities of our nature, make marriage a matter of bargain and sale. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 25.

THE HAND WITHOUT THE HEART; or, The Life Trials of Jessie Loring. Exhibiting a noble and true woman, who, during the bitter years of an unhappy marriage, swerved not amid the most alluring temptations from honor and duty, and showing the final reward of her long trial of faith, love, and high religious principle. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 25.

GOLDEN GRAINS FROM LIFE'S HARVEST-Field. Remarkably entertaining and lively pictures of actual life, which demonstrate the importance of good principles, pure affections, and human sympathies full of the soul's nutrition. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 25.

THE GOOD TIME COMING. Exhibiting the dissatisfaction and yearnings of the human heart, and pointing out the golden sunlight which from the distance is continually shining down upon it for the purpose of warming and nourishing it. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 25.

THE ALLEN HOUSE; or, Twenty Years Ago and Now. Portraying vividly the legitimate fruits consequent upon the pursuit of either of the two ways in life, the right and the wrong. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 25.

WHAT CAN WOMAN DO? In which the great influence and power of woman, for good or for evil, is shown in a very interesting series of life pictures. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 25.

THE WITHERED HEART. Affording a striking illustration of the necessity for avoiding the false and selfish principles which too often lead to a sad and total waste of being. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 25.

THE ANGEL AND THE DEMON. A work of thrilling dramatic interest, which contains moral lessons of the highest importance to families and young mothers, and which stands forth pre-eminently among the author's many fine productions. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 25.

THE TRIALS AND CONFESSIONS OF A Housekeeper. Furnishing, from real life, many of the trials, perplexities, and incidents of housekeeping, embracing in its range of subjects such as are grave and instructive, as well as agreeable and amusing. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Illustrations. Cloth. $1 25.

AFTER THE STORM. A new and fascinating volume in which the folly of too much reliance upon one's own opinions, and a disregard of the attentions due one another, is fearfully apparent, while the story is deeply interesting throughout, and the moral unexceptionable. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

THE WAY TO PROSPER, and Other Tales. Showing the power of virtue, harmony, and fraternal affection among members of a family in securing their future well-being and prosperity, and, wherein the want of these qualities conduces to misfortune and ruin. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 50.

THE ANGEL OF THE HOUSEHOLD. and Other Tales. In which we learn how kind feelings and obedience to our better impulses benefit us, and how, with the little heavenly visitant, the tender babe, angelic influences enter the household. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 50.

TRUE RICHES; or, Wealth Without Wings, and Other Tales. The lessons in this work show how ruin succeeds to unfairness, and success to honesty of purpose; setting forth truths that all should remember, and that no one can learn too early or too often. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Steel Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 50

HEART HISTORIES, and Life Pictures. Giving painfully correct histories, such as too often cloud the hearts of people and may generally be seen in the dreary eyes, the sober faces, the subdued and mournful tones that almost daily cross our paths. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

HOME SCENES: Its Lights and Shadows as Pictured by Love and Selfishness. Directed toward keeping the light of love forever burning in our dwelling, and toward aiding us in overcoming those things which are evil and selfish, while each moral presented seems in itself a jewel worthy a place in memory's casket. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

SPARING TO SPEND; or, The Loftons and the Pinkertons. A book showing the beneficial results of a wise restriction of the wants to the means—a virtue which all should possess, and which in this extravagant age cannot be too forcibly illustrated. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

LIGHT ON SHADOWED PATHS. Stories which faithfully point to many of the different shadows that have crossed the paths of others, and which afford much of invaluable instruction, tending to rend the clouds that may hover o'er us, and to keep us within the sunshine of life. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

OUT IN THE WORLD. Unveiling the sad experiences that necessarily await jealous, proud, and sensitive young men, and undisciplined, wayward, and petulant young women; also, revealing the true and only way of escape. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

OUR NEIGHBORS IN THE CORNER House. A fascinating and stirring narrative, which adds its terrible evidence to the fact that sin will find people out, and that justice will triumph over injury—even under extraordinary circumstances. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

NOTHING BUT MONEY. Picturing, in the most forcible style, the difference between avaricious and ambitious men and those who prefer social happiness and peace; also, offering a striking lesson to the very many young minds in which gold outlustres every other consideration. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

WHAT CAME AFTERWARDS. A sequel to the preceding volume, yet a story complete in itself, in which we are shown how the precious gold in our natures, after we have encountered severe discipline, will reveal itself in our intercourse with the world. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

THE THREE ERAS IN A WOMAN'S LIFE; or, the Maiden, the Wife, and the Mother. A work depicting the happy effects of right training when brought in distinct contrast with the wrong, and showing also the fruits of right living. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 50.

BEFORE AND AFTER MARRIAGE; or, Sweethearts and Wives, and Other Tales. Drawing choice pictures of lovers and husbands and wives, faithfully contrasting marriage and celibacy, and teaching the folly of employing money to the mere pampering of pride and indolence. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 50.

THE MARTYR WIFE, and Other Tales. A remarkably interesting work, pointing out social follies, and including the excellent and popular stories of "The Heiress," and "The Ruined Gamester." By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

MARY ELLIS; or, The Runaway Match, and Other Tales. Attractive experiences that will readily commend themselves to the real life of many who have sought for but never found their ideal. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

THE YOUNG LADY AT HOME. Home stories most happily drawn by the author, involving the troubles, errors, and perplexities incident to domestic life, and showing woman's real mission. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

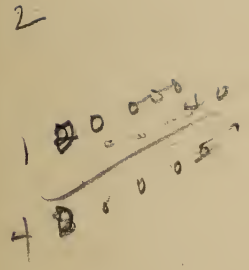
STEPS TOWARDS HEAVEN; or, Religion in Common Life. A volume, free from sectarian or denominational influences, which cannot but deeply impress the mind, and awaken in every one the highest type of human happiness. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF REAL LIFE. Containing a series of captivating and intensely interesting Temperance stories, which, perhaps, no other author can furnish with equal acceptance, and containing a moral suasion which cannot but affect for good all who read. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Illustrations. Cloth. $1 75.

SKETCHES OF LIFE AND CHARACTER. Pleasantly written stories, drawn from everyday life, and free from all exaggerations, which invariably leave a powerful impression upon the mind of the reader. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Illustrations. Cloth. $1 75.

LEAVES FROM THE BOOK OF HUMAN Life. A choice selection of stories, intended to leave the mind active with good purposes and kindly sympathies—the value of each one of which is clearly evident. By T. S. ARTHUR. Numerous Illustrations. Cloth. $1 75.

SWEET HOME; or, Friendship's Golden Altar. A companion for the evening hour; pure in morals, elevating in tone, cheerful, hopeful, and reverent in all its views of God, and a transcript of "Home, Sweet Home." By FRANCES E. PERCIVAL. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 25.



12
6
49

Arthur.

True riches.

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION Camp Library : Book Card

Date	Sign Your Name, Company and Regiment Here
	Na
	Co.
	Co.
	Co
	Co
	Name
	Reg.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA

3 0112 002077078